

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Cruel Twists

Nebraska National Guard responds after May tornado hammers Beaver Crossing, then again in June when massive twin tornadoes rip through downtown Pilger

■Twin tornadoes nearly wipe out village of Pilger

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

In what seems to be a reoccurring theme this spring and summer, multiple tornadoes ripped through northeast Nebraska, June 16, affecting several small communities throughout the area including Stanton, Wakefield and Wisner. But hardest hit was Pilger, a village of approximately 350 people about 30 miles east of Norfolk.

A severe storm produced twin tornadoes about a mile apart, the biggest of which, an EF4, tore directly through the heart of the town. According to local authorities, as much as 75 percent of the town was either heavily damaged or destroyed.

Gov. Dave Heineman declared a state of emergency, allowing the Nebraska National Guard to be deployed into the area. Twenty Guardsmen from the 189th Transportation Company based in Wayne and Norfolk were on scene the next morning to assist local authorities in maintaining public safety.

“We’re pulling security, assisting Nebraska State Patrol officers with security here in the town of Pilger,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brendan Dorcey, 189th Trans. Co. who also served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Guardsmen.

The Soldiers were put on state active duty and rotated on two 12-hour shifts



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Our Flag Was Still There: The U.S. flag flies above Pilger, Neb., June 18, following severe weather and twin tornadoes, one of which almost wiped out the entire village, June 16.

starting July 17. They were finally released from duty at 8 a.m., June 24. During their shifts, the Guardsmen manned roads leading into Pilger helping control traffic, watched out for public safety, helped enforce a curfew and provided security once the town was shut down at night.

According to Dorcey, he didn’t struggle finding volunteers for the duty as many of the Wayne-based Soldiers were eager to help and uniquely qualified after seeing a tornado tear through the southeast section of Wayne last fall. That tornado, although destructive, was a glancing blow to Wayne compared to the damage in Pilger.

“The damage here is much more extensive,” said Dorcey. “I’m just in shock as you look around. The pictures just don’t do it justice.”

One Soldier pulling duty following the tornadoes once student taught in the village’s middle school, which was nearly destroyed. His reason for volunteering for the duty was simple.

“It’s the right thing to do, I don’t know how else to explain it,” said Staff Sgt. Daniel Roerber, a truck driver with the 189th Trans. Co.

See PILGER on 4.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

On Patrol: Sgt. Westley Negley, Detachment 1, 1195th Transportation Company, mans a traffic control point in Beaver Crossing, Neb., May 14, following severe weather and a tornado. Sixteen Soldiers from the Kearney- and York-based 1195th Transportation Company ensured only those who belonged made it into the village.

■Nebraska National Guardsmen assist Beaver Crossing following tornado strike

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Sixteen Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers helped local officials maintain public safety in a small eastern Nebraska community that was devastated by a tornado, May 11.

The Soldiers, who came primarily from

the Kearney- and York-based 1195th Transportation Company worked at traffic control points leading into and out of Beaver Crossing, Nebraska, – population 603 – which sustained significant damage when a tornado tore through the town on Mother’s Day. The tornado was part of a long-ranging super cell thunderstorm

See BEAVER CROSSING on 5.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

A Grateful Nation: Sgt. Taylor Siebrandt, Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team trainer, holds a folded flag during a funeral rehearsal at the “Spirit of 1776” Armory in Lincoln, Neb., May 22.

Final Respects

■ Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team hones skills

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

As soon as a new recruit raises a right hand and swears an oath to defend America, they enter a fraternity of sorts – a fraternity of military members dating back even before the founding of the nation. Once that service member’s military career is over, memories, friends and bonds they made don’t disappear. And when their flame is finally extinguished, a group of dedicated Nebraska National Guardsmen are there to offer their final respects, in a payback, of sorts, for sacrifices made.

Since 2000, the Nebraska National

See HONORS on 9.

Nebraska Air, Army National Guard practice emergency response

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach
Staff Writer

“Exercise, exercise, exercise. Lockdown, lockdown, lockdown,” echoed from the intercom system. Police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, and emergency personnel waited on stand-by as the sound of gun-fire shattered the silence in the air.

What seemed like a normal, breezy April morning at the Nebraska National Guard air base turned into havoc and horror within seconds.

Thankfully, all of the havoc was simulated when the Nebraska Air and Army National Guard collaborated with local law enforcement and emergency response agencies for a mass-casualty exercise, April 24, at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Chief Master Sgt. Carl Oestmann, chief

of security forces and exercise director, said he wanted a realistic scenario to effectively test the response of his personnel, along with civilian first responders, so he contacted the agencies that would be involved if a mass casualty incident ever occurred. Those agencies included the Lincoln Police Department, Nebraska State Patrol, TSA, Airport Police, Nebraska Military Department including Joint Force Headquarters, Lincoln Fire and Rescue, and 911 operators.

“I wanted to ensure we refine our skills and work collaboratively with other first responder partners,” said Oestmann. “Having the opportunity to do this training can only benefit us – there is no downside. I think this is a great opportunity for the military and for our responders to work together because we all have the same cause: protection of the citizens of our great state.”

The purpose of the exercise was to ensure that the first responders and emergency

See RESPONSE on 7.

Inside



Nebraska CERF-P prepares for disaster

See story and photos on 3.



National Guard marathoners take to Lincoln streets

See story and photos on 17-18.

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NEWS DIGEST

■Dempsey: Defense budget uncertainty must end

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Uncertainty on the defense budget must end, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told North Carolina reporters recently.

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said that unless the situation changes, U.S. service members may be sent into harm’s way inadequately prepared.

When reporters asked how the military can do more with less, the chairman said that is not his approach.

“We really can’t ask the kids to do more with less,” he said. “We can do less with less, but not less well.”

This, the chairman explained, means the military must take the resources available and apply them across the many accounts that demand resources, such as manpower, infrastructure, modernization, training and readiness.

“In the old cliché, it’s really not rocket science,” he said. “We have a pretty good understanding of how to balance our budget. If we’re not able to balance it, then we run the risk of failing in our most sacred obligation, which is never sending a man or woman into harm’s way unless they are the best-trained and best-equipped and best-led.”

Each of the services made tough decisions in crafting the budget request, Dempsey said, noting that the request boils down to three things: certainty, flexibility and time.

“We need certainty—we can’t keep doing this one year at a time,” he said. The lack of certainty is felt in North Carolina at places such as Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base and Camp Lejeune, he said.

Flexibility also is vital, Dempsey said. “We’ve got to be able to retire systems we no longer need or that can accomplish the mission in other ways,” he added. “And we’ve got to be able to get rid of some excess infrastructure. We estimate that we have about 20 percent excess infrastructure in terms of bases, camps and stations.”

And the military needs more time to adapt to the new fiscal climate, the chairman told reporters.

“We’ve got to spread this out,” he said. “To ask the department to reduce its budget by a trillion dollars over 10 years is extraordinarily irresponsible, frankly. If we go to the full level of the Budget Control Act, we will put the nation at unacceptable risk.” The Budget Control Act requires sequestration-level spending cuts to resume in fiscal year 2016.

The cuts will ruin readiness, Dempsey said.

“If they don’t act this year on our recommendations for pay, compensation and health care, then the bill will be about \$4 billion that will be passed back to the military and we will have to find within the budget \$4 billion,” the chairman said.

“When we are told we can’t reduce infrastructure, we can’t retire weapons systems, we can’t change pay, compensation, health care, what’s left ... is readiness and modernization,” he continued. “So we are going

to have to raid our readiness accounts and our modernization account.”

■Hagel says U.S. continues to remain an unvaled power

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – While some around the world believe the United States is a weakening superpower, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel defended America as the world’s dominant force, May 11.

“I have seen some of (that perception), yes,” Hagel said, during an interview on the ABC program “This Week with George Stephanopoulos.”

“But we are still the dominant power. No one’s in our universe, whether you apply a metric or measurement of an economic power or military power.”

But that doesn’t mean the United States can solve every problem alone, he said.

“No nation can do that. I do think there’s a sense out there by some that somehow America has powers eroding, or we’re not going to use our power, or we’re too timid about our power. I think we have been wise on how we use our power.”

“I don’t think you can run foreign policy or lead a nation and be president of the United States based on what other people think of you,” he added.

Hagel was asked about several issues in the news, including the kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls by the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria, the situation Ukraine and problems at the Veterans Affairs Department, in addition to cyber security threats, and questions regarding transgender people serving in the military.

The United States has sent a team of experts from the FBI, the intelligence community and the military to Nigeria to help authorities in the West African nation find the girls, kidnapped in the remote northeast last month.

“It’s a vast country, so this is not going to be an easy task, but we’re going to bear every asset we could possibly use to help the Nigerian government.”

However, he said the United States has no plans to put American troops on the ground.

On the crisis in Ukraine, Hagel said even though Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow was withdrawing tens of thousands of its troops from along the border with Ukraine, Russian forces appear to be still there.

“Russia continues to isolate itself for a short-term gain,” he said. “The Russians may feel they’re somehow winning, but the world is not just about short term,” Hagel noted.

Regarding the growing threat of cyber attacks, Hagel said the United States is paying full attention to cyber security threats, but added it’s difficult to be confident.

“You can’t be,” he said. “The fact is, [cyber security issues] are as dangerous a threat as the world is dealing with, especially the United States. It’s quiet, it’s insidious, it’s deadly.”

Hagel was also asked whether department policy regarding transgender individuals serving in the military should be revisited

Dempsey discusses use of military instrument of power

HONOLULU (DoD News) — The nation’s military instrument of power works best when used in conjunction with all aspects of American might, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said July .

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey told the members of the International Forum at the Pacific Club hat the military instrument is powerful, but also nuanced.

The chairman’s speech brought to mind the expression “To the man whose only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.” Dempsey said the United States shouldn’t be afraid to use other tools, but that there will be times when the nation will need to drive a nail, and the military provides that option.

The general spoke about the greater implications of the global security environment and how it requires the United States to broadly apply the military instrument of power.

The U.S. military is the most powerful, versatile and sophisticated in history, the chairman said.

“It is also one of the most flexible and adaptable tools that our nation has at its disposal and available to our elected leaders,” he added. “It has to be to address the complex world in which we live.”

Mere military presence can shape behavior, the general noted, pointing out that a waiting American military presence can bolster diplomatic initiatives, provide support to partners and allies and deter potential adversaries.

The U.S. military can share intelligence, sustain reconnaissance and provide security, he said, and American service members can and do bring relief to disaster areas and provide humanitarian supplies across continents.

The military can do a lot, and it sometimes is the default option for leaders, especially if something needs to be done quickly, Dempsey said.

The chairman said his job is to give civilian elected leaders military options.

“I must articulate how our military instrument can be used to provide options and to achieve outcomes that support and protect our nation’s interests,” he explained. “More specifically, I must be clear about what effects our military can and cannot achieve. I must represent how fast we can do it, for how long, at what risk and with what opportunity costs.”

And this can’t be done in a vacuum, he added. “I must also consider how our military action or inaction contributes to or detracts from another important instrument of our national power, and that is America’s enormous power of emulation,” he said.

Dempsey touched on the geographic differences he must consider. In the Asia-Pacific region, he noted, there is a rising tide of nationalism. The region also poised to be the economic engine of the 21st century.

“Traditional power-on-power relations will shape the region and ultimately decide if it will achieve its potential,” the chairman said.

now that gays and lesbians are allowed to serve openly.

He called the issue complicated because of its medical component.

“These issues require medical attention. In austere locations where we put our men and women in many cases [those military posts] don’t always offer that kind of opportunity,” he explained.

“I do think it should continually be reviewed ... because the bottom line [is] every qualified American who wants to serve our country should have an opportunity, if they fit the qualifications and can do it. This is an area we’ve not defined enough,” Hagel said.

■Defense Department honors its top military journalists

FORT MEADE, Md (AFPS) – More than 110 Defense Department employees and organizations were honored May 9, for the extraordinary sacrifices made by military journalists and visual information specialists around the world.

The annual Defense Department Communicators of Excellence awards ceremony was held at the Defense Information School or DINFOS, where service members and civilians were recognized for excellence in graphic arts, photography, videography and visual information production.

This year garnered more than 3,500 award submissions from 603 entrants.

On behalf of President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, Brent Colburn, assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, noted the worldwide scope of coverage of DoD’s activities which includes a presence in 94 countries.

“Even with the changing mission coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan, that global footprint is going to remain vital, and we’re going to remain engaged around the world, so these are truly global awards,” he said.

Those honored represent the brightest and most-talented of media working on every continent, in every type of situation, he added.

“Without our journalists and visual information specialists, both uniformed and civilian, it would be difficult for [DOD] ... to meet its obligations to document our actions, tell our story and keep the American people informed,” Colburn said.

He also noted that DINFOS does an “outstanding job” every day, providing the armed services with highly skilled print and broadcast journalists, public affairs specialists and visual information professionals that comprise the Defense communications team.

Thanking what he called a “unique group of public servants,” Colburn emphasized the difficult nature of their jobs to tell DOD’s story.

“You all put yourselves in harm’s way so that our citizens can be better armed to understand the work that the military does,” he said. “The sacrifices you make speak not only to your character, but to the values of this nation.”

Shrinking DoD budget could jeopardize readiness, Pentagon officials tell National Summit attendees

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – In remarks at the Defense Communities 2014 National Summit, June 5, Pentagon officials described how force structure reductions will impact the Defense Department and industry partners amid ongoing budget woes and sequestration.

Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Alan F. Estevez and Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment John Conger warned that a lack of modernization and procurement investments could shrink the industrial base and jeopardize readiness.

“We’re struggling to get ourselves in the balance (but) one of the ways to get in balance is to divest ourselves of unneeded infrastructure,” Estevez said. “The dialogue has to start if you want to have that national

security military force that this nation deserves.”

Meanwhile, Estevez said the department is driving its own efficiencies internally, but certain cuts such as a projected 15 percent procurement paring could jeopardize the force’s technological superiority over time, particularly in terms of the DoD’s ties to the industrial base.

“We’re very concerned about what happens with our industrial base in this environment because the Department of Defense does its own (research, development, test and evaluation), but we rely on industry as well,” Estevez said.

DoD officials will also review the services acquisition process, Estevez noted. “

We spend \$360 billion a year to acquire things and services, and services is about \$180 billion of that spend,” he said.

He explained that while there is an elaborately structured process designed around buying things

such as aircraft, satellites and other equipment, services has historically been less defined as it relates to the DoD.

“We’re trying to put some rigor around (services),” Estevez said. “We’re looking at what’s the best tradecraft in maintenance, (internet technology,) and engineering and putting it all into practice.”

Even savings of ten percent in such areas could yield billions in savings, he added.

Conger insists that sequestration and its associated rigors is “the new normal” and while the conversation about base realignment and closure continues, it should not end there.

“We think saving money is an important thing to do, but BRAC isn’t going to solve our problems like some magic ball,” Conger said. “We have budget problems and we’re going to have to look for efficiencies.”

Prairie Soldier

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Letters, articles, notices of events, photographs and art are welcome, but may be edited for clarity or brevity. Publication of any submission is at the discretion of the editor. Submissions can also be emailed to kevin.j.hynes.mil@mail.mil. All photos must be high resolution and include complete caption information.

The views and opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the Military Department of Nebraska or the U.S. Department of Defense.

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Clean Sweep: Members of the decontamination section of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, also known as CERF-P, check for contamination on a "victim" during an exercise at Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 16.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Nebraska National Guard CERF-P team conducts training to prepare for... When Disaster Strikes

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Writer

Folks living in the Midwest are very familiar with the story about Dorothy Gale, a little Kansas farm girl, and her dog, Toto. The two are blown away in a tornado and land in a fairyland named Oz. The story ends happily with Dorothy and Toto returning home to find her house intact and family by her bedside.

Unlike Dorothy's Kansas, natural disasters rarely have happy endings. To practice for those not-so-happy endings, approximately 200 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians from the Nebraska National Guard's CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) participated in an exercise at the National Guard's Mead Training Site, May 14-18.

The exercise tested the team's ability to perform their roles in case a major disaster with numerous civilian casualties occurs in Nebraska or FEMA Region Seven.

Members of the Iowa and Nebraska National Guard practiced their response capabilities under a realistic exercise scenario involving a multiple tornados strike on a major city causing wide-spread infrastructure damage and a potential chemical leak.

"We bring a unique capability for domestic response," said Lt. Col. Tom Mortimer, CERF-P commander from the 126th Chemical Battalion in Omaha, Neb. "In the event that Mother Nature or a bad guy decides to negotiate nefarious acts on us, we are here to (assist in) search and extraction, decontamination, medical, and command and control."

Nebraska's CERF-P is made up of different Guard units throughout the state who work together as one team. Its mission is to provide immediate response capabilities to the governor that include: incident site search of damaged buildings, rescuing trapped casualties, providing decontamination and performing medical triage and initial treatment to stabilize patients for transport to medical facilities. It is comprised of four elements: search and extraction, decontamination, medical and command and control.

Airmen and Soldiers on search and extraction teams crawled over rubble working together to extract victims of the tornado scenario. Victims were played by role-players and mannequins elaborately made-up to represent the dead and injured. Victims were then taken through medical triage and decontamination stations.

"As the search and extraction team for the state of Nebraska, we provide an essential element of the disaster relief effort," said 2nd Lt. Trevor Bellows, 623rd Engineer Company (Vertical Construction), and officer in charge of the search and extraction team. His team of Soldiers and Airmen are in charge of lifting, hauling, breaking, breaching, shoring up walls, and rope missions during the exercise. He said the National Guard's role in real world missions is important because it has more personnel and can cover a larger area than most civilian agencies can.

Search and extraction teams also included members from of the 155th Air Refueling Wing. "It's a great opportunity to work jointly

"Having an exercise like this is important because to do it correctly when life actually depends on it, we have to come out here and practice when life does not depend on it."

— Lt. Col. Tom Mortimer
CERF-P Commander



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Tight Seal: Now Spc. Jonas Houessou, 623rd Engineer Company (Vertical Construction), helps seal the suit of a member of the Nebraska National Guard's CERF-P search and rescue team during an exercise at Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 16.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Movin' On Up: Members of the search and rescue section of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, also known as CERF-P, hoist rescue equipment into a simulated collapsed building during an exercise at Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 16. The exercise simulated a tornado striking an urban area causing widespread damage and contaminating victims.

with the Army as one team." said Senior Airman Cody Wyatt, a medic from the 155th Medical Group and member of the search and extraction team. "I'm a civilian first responder and the experience I gain here is valuable training for my civilian job as well."

The CERF-P's decontamination element was led by Soldiers of the 754th Reconnaissance and Decontamination Company. The decontamination element is the receiving area for casualties after being transported from the disaster site. In the exercise, the Guard members managed a casualty collection area for ambulatory patients injured from a simulated chemical spill caused by multiple tornados. They also decontaminated the mock patients before sending them to medical evaluators.

The 155th Medical Group from the Nebraska Air Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing of the Nebraska Air Guard is in charge of the medical element's triage team, which assesses



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Ultra Realistic: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, also known as CERF-P, tend to a "victim" during an exercise at Mead Training Site, May 16. The exercise tested the team's ability to perform their roles in a major disaster with numerous civilian casualties.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Helping Hand: Members of the medical section of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, also known as CERF-P, tend to a "victim" during an exercise at Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 16.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Into The Light: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's CERF-P extract a "victim" during an exercise at Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 16. The CERF-P is made up of members of different Guard units throughout the state who work to provide immediate response capability to first responders.



Total Loss: A Nebraska National Guard Humvee drives through the streets of Pilger, Neb., June 18, past what is left of a church as clean-up efforts begin after twin tornadoes slammed the town of approximately 350 people in northeast Nebraska. Twenty members of the 189th Transportation Company were put on state active duty to assist local authorities.



Credential Check: Staff Sgt. Jason Morrison, a squad leader with the Nebraska National Guard's 189th Transportation Company, directs a volunteer just outside tornado-ravaged Pilger, Neb., June 18. The 20 members of the Nebraska Army National Guard who served on state active duty in Pilger following the June 16 tornadoes, assisted local officials in maintaining public safety by directing traffic, providing security and enforcing a town curfew.



Tough Town: Damage in Pilger, Neb., after severe storms produced twin tornadoes about a mile apart, the biggest of which, an EF4, tore directly through the heart of the town wiping out or damaging approximately 75 percent of the town.



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

On Patrol: Sgt. Scott Chase, 189th Transportation Company, drives a Humvee through the streets of tornado-ravaged Pilger, Neb., June 18. Twenty members of the Nebraska Army National Guard unit served nearly a week of state active duty in Pilger where they assisted local officials in maintaining public safety in and around the town, which was heavily damaged during severe storms, June 16.



Shrapnel Wounds: A garage in Pilger, Neb., is punctured by a piece of wood hurled by a tornado that hit the northeast Nebraska village on June 16. A severe storm produced twin tornadoes about a mile apart, the biggest of which, an EF4, tore directly through the heart of the town wiping out or damaging approximately 75 percent of the town.

PILGER continued from page 1.

in Wayne. “With friends and family you’ve got to step up when they’re in need – it’s small town people.”

“I mean that’s why you signed up,” he added. “As the National Guard you’re not always expected to go to Iraq, go to Afghanistan, you’re there for natural disasters. This is what we’re kind designed to do, so when you actually get to do it and show a presence it lets the community know that we’re here and we’re doing what we’re supposed to.”

Teresa and Trey Wisniewski were sleeping in their Pilger home after working the nightshift when phone calls, texts and the severe weather warnings on their phones woke them up. They gathered their animals and headed for the basement. At 4:17 Teresa said she got a text from a friend and at 4:18 the house above them was gone.

As the Wisniewskis watched hundreds of volunteers comb through what was left of their be-

longings, June 18, they struggled to put into words how much the out-pouring of support meant to them.

“It’s just amazing to know that there’s people here that are willing to keep people from coming in and taking stuff,” said Teresa. “We don’t have much left, but we appreciate having all the help - people coming in and helping guard the town.”

Staff Sgt. Jason Morrison, also a truck driver with the 189th Trans. Co., didn’t get a chance to help out with flooding two years ago and wanted to lend a hand in his home state before he retires.

“I’ve been in the Guard for 14 years and I’ve never been on a state deployment. I’ve been overseas and I’ve done a lot of the other stuff... ,but part of being in the Guard I wanted to help in disaster relief,” said Morrison.

“I live 40 miles away from Pilger and it’s just a lot more rewarding in a lot of ways to see that you actually helped your own area,” he added.

Helping Nebraska communities in need is what motivated Morrison.

“This is where I live – this is more local,” said Morrison. “I’m helping out my neighbors and communities that I’ve been around all my life.”

“This is what makes us different than the regular Army,” he added. “This is where we drill, this is where we work here in northeast Nebraska and that just makes it more local – more rewarding.”

And although the Soldiers faced challenging conditions with long hours and hot days, Dorsey said his Soldiers were happy to be performing the duty.

“We’re part of the community,” said Dorsey. “These are the people we serve. It’s part of our job, not just on the national scale but on the local scale – this is what we do. A lot of guys – the guys that we have down here – they feel more like this is our job rather than maybe some of the other stuff we do. Serving our community is a big reason.”



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Point Person: Staff Sgt. Aaron Krajicek, a squad leader with Kearney’s 1195th Transportation Company, points out the location of the in-processing center for workers involved in the tornado response at Beaver Crossing, Neb., May 13. Krajicek, a University of Nebraska-Omaha student who is studying Emergency Management in civilian life, was among the 16 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers called to duty in Beaver Crossing where they assisted local officials in maintaining public safety following the “Mother’s Day” tornado.

BEAVER CROSSING continued from page 1.

that travelled approximately 150 miles across south-central and southeastern Nebraska, spawning up to a reported 19 tornadoes.

According to the Soldiers, they were happy to be able to help the citizens of Beaver Crossing begin the hard work of rebuilding their community by ensuring that those who have a need to be in the town are given access, while keeping others at bay.

“We’re just trying to keep the pesky ones out,” said Sgt. Eric Becker, a truck driver with York’s Detachment 1, 1195th Transportation Company, as he worked at a traffic control point, making sure that those drivers who were trying to enter town had legitimate reasons for being there.

“There’s a lot of work that needs to be done right now, and there are a lot of people that are coming to help out. However, there are also people who just want to come in and look around... those are the ones that we’re trying to turn away. There will be a time for looking around... now isn’t that time, though.”

That was pretty obvious, too, considering the amount of damage sustained by Beaver Crossing. Homes throughout the community received significant damage.

Efforts to clear the massive tree debris still clogged many of the streets, while pieces of metal from a nearby grain bin and other buildings also contributed to the dangerous conditions.

Overall, the Soldiers say they were happy to be able to help out.

“I feel like it’s important,” said Staff Sgt. Aaron Krajicek, a squad leader with Kearney’s 1195th Trans. Co. “We’re Nebraskans helping Nebraskans. We’re happy to be able to help out this small town that got nailed pretty hard.”

Sgt. Daniel Tenorio agreed. A truck driver from Kearney who works as a firefighter in civilian life, Tenorio said the mission was definitely something he was proud to be part of.

“I like it when you get to help people. This is what we sign up to do,” he said. “It’s good to help people when they need it.”



No Place To Play: The playground at the Beaver Crossing Park stands amid the rubble of trees, twisted metal and other debris deposited there by the Mother’s Day tornado. While most of the playground equipment appeared to survive the damaging storm, a nearby baseball park withstood significant damage.



Helping Hands: Sgt. Eric Becker, a Nebraska Army National Guard truck driver with York’s Detachment 1, 1195th Transportation Company, directs traffic entering Beaver Crossing, Neb., May 13.



On The Scene: Tom Heiser, Dave Reisen and Gary Peterson work in the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s Mobile Operations Center, which was set up in downtown Beaver Crossing, Neb, following the May 11 tornado. The vehicle allows the NEMA officials help coordinate the state’s assistance to local emergency management officials.



Recreational Loss: The remains of a camper stand at the side of a Beaver Crossing street where it was tossed during the Mother’s Day tornado that struck the Nebraska community on May 11.

■ Nebraska officials open two readiness centers

Grand Island aviation units expand footprint

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Staff Photojournalist

The brand new Nebraska National Guard Grand Island Readiness Center building was dedicated May 27 by Gov. Dave Heineman, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and other state and local leaders in Grand Island, Neb.

"This is an exciting day for the state of Nebraska, National Guard and the city of Grand Island as we officially open this new Grand Island Readiness Center," said Heineman.

"We are sending a very powerful message today that we know we need up-to-date, modern facilities to train the young men and women that are serving in the Nebraska National Guard," added Heineman. "And we want them to know, their families and our citizens that we need facilities like this so they can be prepared when the time calls."

The new \$18 million building will house multiple Nebraska National Guard aviation units including Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-376th Aviation Battalion (Security and Support), Company D, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, Company B, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, Detachment 1, Company D, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, Detachment 1, Company E, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion and Detachment 4, Company B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion.

The building includes 92,051 square feet for training, administration and support which will provide approximately 226 full- and part-time Soldiers to work and train in the facility.

"This facility represents a very modern and technologically advanced facility," said Bohac. "There is a reason why this unit and these units associated with aviation were built here in Grand Island because they provide the great capabilities across the great state of Nebraska in a rapid way. We are very proud of them."

Nebraska Construction and Facilities Management Officer, Lt. Col. Shane Martin echoed how this facility will help the aviation



Photos by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

New Digs: The Grand Island Readiness Center sits next to the Army Aviation Support Facility No. 2 in Grand Island, Neb., May 27. The Readiness Center will house multiple Nebraska Army National Guard aviation units.

units' capabilities.

"The vision for this site was to be designed to be in concert with our aviation support facilities next door," said Martin. "So we focused on specific architecture and landscaping to create a small campus feel."

"This facility was designed with extreme attention for functionality and the common use," added Martin. "The training opportunities and training facilities in this building are huge. The classrooms were designed and set up to allow them to do a lot of training here rather than going to other location. It's designed for high-sustainability and high-flexibility so we can maneuver as units change or as aircraft changes over the years. They can alter things very easily."



Now Open: Gov. Dave Heineman joins Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska's adjutant general, and other military and local leaders to cut the ribbon of the new Grand Island Readiness Center in Grand Island, Neb., May 27. The \$18 million building includes 92,051 square feet for training, administration and support and will house approximately 226 full- and part-time Soldiers.



State-Of-The-Art: The inside of the Grand Island Readiness Center was designed to provide up-to-date, modern facilities for members of the Nebraska National Guard. The designers included different aviation architectural features throughout the building to incorporate the aviation units and their missions.

New Mead-Titan Readiness Center officially opened in May

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Editor

Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, joined other state and local leaders in cutting the ribbon to the newly-constructed Nebraska National Guard Mead-Titan Readiness Center building, during a ceremony, May 21, at the Nebraska National Guard's Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb.

The new \$9.6 million building includes 43,563 square feet of space for training, administration and support and will house Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry (Reconnaissance and Surveillance) and Detachment 2, 1167th Battalion Support Company. Approximately 118 full- and part-time Soldiers will work and train in the facility.

The Mead-Titan Readiness Center sits next to the Mead-Atlas Readiness Center, which was officially opened in July 2013.

Heineman thanked those involved with the project and said Nebraska National Guard Soldiers deserve new facilities like this for training.

"We're proud of our Soldiers, we're proud of our veterans," said Heineman. "You do an incredible job for us every single day and it does not go unnoticed by the people of the state of Nebraska."

"When you get right down to it, what it's all about is the training and preparation and all that we need to do every single day to be prepared when we call you into action," he added.

That preparation, Heineman



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

New Space: The Mead-Titan Readiness Center sits on the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 21. The \$9.6 million facility includes 43,563 square feet and will house Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry (Reconnaissance and Surveillance) and Detachment 2, 1167th Battalion Support Company.



Quick Snip: Gov. Dave Heineman joins Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska's adjutant general, and other military and local leaders to cut the ribbon of the new Mead-Titan Readiness Center at the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 21.

said, has been displayed during countless overseas missions but more recently during severe storms and tornadoes that impacted several communities here in Nebraska.

"These facilities – I know from my own experience – are very, very important to give you the opportunity to train and prepare in as



Natural Light: The interior of the new Mead-Titan Readiness Center located at the Nebraska National Guard's Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb.

real-life setting as we can put you in," said Heineman. "These facili-

ties are absolutely critical."

Bohac also thanked those involved in the project and said it was an exciting time to open a state-of-the-art facility, which represents an investment in the Soldiers and their families. But it also represents the Nebraska National Guard's connection with the communities we serve.

And with a challenging fiscal environment, the United States has come to rely more heavily on the National Guard.

"In this past decade, Nebraska and the United States of America has come to depend on a National Guard that is well trained and ready for whatever mission is given to us," said Bohac.

"And as the United States continues to turn to the National Guard to meet its commitments in a tightening budgetary envi-

ronment, it's going to require National Guard Soldiers to complete even more of their training requirements here – here at home – because that's a great value for the United States, and this facility will enable those Soldiers to do exactly that," he added.

Lt. Col. Shane Martin, Construction and Facilities Management Office, said within 30 days the new facility would be evaluated and was expected to be given a LEED Gold Certification. That certification is a building rating system focused on environmental systems within the building. It would become the second Nebraska National Guard facility, behind a facility in Columbus, to earn that status.

Some environmentally sound characteristics built into the new facility include a geothermal climate-control system; a mechanical system tied to lighting and motion sensors; increased harvesting of natural light; and indoor air quality monitoring.

The building also features a library, fitness facility, storage areas, and classrooms. Throughout the building, acoustic panels used to reduce sound reverberation are covered with pictures from deployments of the two units who will call the facility home. Near the entrance of the building are four metal displays showing four of the eight campaigns the Nebraska National Guard has been involved in. The other four campaign displays are located in front of the facility's sister building, the Mead Atlas Readiness Center, a few feet away.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Quick Response: (L to R) Staff Sgt. Anthony Ray, Staff Sgt. Lawrence Hudecek and Master Sgt. Daniel Emken, all members of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, clear the stairwell in the main hangar at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, Neb., during a mass-casualty exercise, April 24. The exercise was designed to help the agencies involved learn how to work and communicate.

RESPONSE

continued from page 1.

agencies, both military and civilian, know how to work and communicate with one another in case an incident ever occurs.

That was evident considering the nature of the exercise response that followed.

Police and fire department radios crackled as rumors swarmed among reaction teams to be on the lookout for two hostile individuals darting through a building, severely injuring anyone in their path. Two Nebraska Air National Guard Security Forces personnel spotted an abandoned and strangely parked vehicle outside the main hangar entrance. Teams cautiously entered the building. The Security Forces personnel and Lincoln Police Department strategically swept through the building, clearing rooms, notifying medical personnel of simulated victims.

When the threat was finally contained, Oestmann reflected on the exercise and the training it provided.

“A lot of the training that the military does is very structured – it has a very systematic flow,” said Oestmann. “The incident dictates the dynamics. It’s what I would consider controlled chaos. Once

One of the exercise’s greatest challenges was ensuring that communication flowed efficiently between the different agencies. The goal, said Oestmann, is to develop a network and partnership between the Nebraska National Guard and first response teams.

Oestmann added the only way to act prudently in a real-world situation is to practice as if it were really happening. He felt they achieved that goal.

“I think we tend to focus on the task we need to accomplish, not real-

“If you hide your head in the sand thinking it’s never going to happen, that’s when it’s going to happen. If you are proactive, you are going to be ready in case a situation does occur. In the long run, that is how we save lives and property”

— **Chief Master Sgt. Carl Oestmann**
155th Security Forces Squadron



Need a Lift? Two Lincoln Police Department officers rescue a simulated injured Airman during a mass-casualty exercise at the Nebraska Air National Guard Base, Lincoln, Neb., April 24. The Nebraska National Guard partnered with Lincoln Police Department and various emergency response agencies during the first-ever exercise of this kind.

izing the decision we either make or don’t make has a ripple effect on other agencies,” said Oestmann. A table-top exercise with a similar scenario was conducted in March 2013, so Oestmann knew this real-world exercise would identify areas needing improvement.

“Some of the issues have already been vetted and worked through, such as a quicker way of communicating with the 911 system on base. The second is dealing with inter-operability. The military, as well as local law enforcement, has its own communication system,” said

Oestmann. “If we had an incident occur, we must have the opportunity to talk to other first responders so we can be one cohesive unit.”

If communication is lacking during an emergency situation,



Busted: Senior Master Sgt. David Nelson, who acted as a simulated shooter during a mass-casualty exercise at the Nebraska National Guard air base, lays on the floor after being hand-cuffed in the 155th Air Refueling Wing Safety Office in Lincoln, Neb., April 24.

everyone’s safety is compromised, along with efficiency of all agencies involved, said Oestmann. Local agencies and the Nebraska National Guard have developed and tested a system which allows the capability for first responders to communicate with each other.

According to Oestmann, advancing technology can greatly improve a reaction to an event like this – as long as one knows how to use it.

“We need to use technology to benefit and improve upon our

processes,” said Oestmann. “It’s finding the people who have the know-how to make it work for their organization.”

An added benefit of the exercise, Oestmann said, is that it really reinforces the bond the Nebraska National Guard shares with the community.

“I think it shows us, with local and state responders, that we are serious about heading this off and working with them,” said Oestmann. “It also gives them the



Team Work: A ‘victim’ played by Master Sgt. Rebecca Boddicker, a personnel specialist at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, is helped onto a stretcher by fellow Airmen, Lincoln Fire and Rescue personnel, and Lincoln Police officers during a mass-casualty exercise at the Nebraska National Guard Air Base, April 24. Multiple local agencies partnered together to conduct the first exercise of this kind on base.

opportunity to use us as a resource.” “The cooperation we received from our civil authorities shows the vested interest they have in helping us and the vested interest we have in them and how we can work together as a team to ensure we meet the goal, keeping people safe,” he added.

“Beyond the specifics of this scenario, exercises like this allow the wing to practice as an organization recovering from an organizational shock an event like this creates,” said Col. Bob Stevenson, 155th Air Refueling Wing vice commander. “Whether a man-caused or natural event, it allows us to take accountability, assess damage and then develop plans of action to restore operations and care for our people,”

Oestmann emphasized preparation is the key. Failing to plan for situations like this is not an option. Ultimately it’s all about protecting our greatest asset – people, he said.

“If you hide your head in the sand thinking it’s never going to happen, that’s when it’s going to happen,” said Oestmann. “If you are proactive, you are going to be ready in case a situation does occur. In the long run, that is how we save lives and property.”

WWII hero awarded Medal of Honor 70 years later

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Staff Writer

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, 1st Lt. Donald K. Schwab distinguished himself above and beyond the call of duty while serving as the commander of Company E, 15th Infantry Regiment, Third Infantry Division, during combat operations against an armed enemy near Lure, France on September 17, 1944.

In the Memorial Chamber of the State Capitol building high above Lincoln, Nebraska, the Medal of Honor was presented to Maralee Schwab, widow of 1st Lt. Schwab almost 70 years after his heroic act during a ceremony unveiling his name on the Medal of Honor plaque in the chamber, June 7.

Sitting in a wheelchair adorned with a small American flag and surrounded by a crowd of nearly 40 friends, family and distinguished guests, 92-year-old Maralee Schwab accepted the Medal of Honor presented to her by Maj. Gen. David Petersen, the mobilization assistant to the deputy commander at the United States Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

U.S. Senators Mike Johanns and Deb Fischer each spoke praising her late husband for his heroism.

"Although the Medal of Honor comes nine years after his death, the bravery and heroism he showed in 1944 is now rightly recognized," said Johanns.

Schwab was born in Hooper, Neb., in 1918 and enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school. During World War II, his tour of duty included posts in North Africa, Italy, and France. On Sept. 17, 1944, near Lure, France, Schwab received an order to overwhelm the enemy line. He led his men twice toward the German line amidst heavy gunfire. He rallied his battered men for a third charge on the hostile holdout working their way to within 50 yards of the German line. In a last attempt, he stormed the line of German foxholes reaching a key machine pistol nest. After tearing off the cover of the firing pit, Schwab clubbed the German



Never Too Late: Maj. Gen. David Petersen, mobilization assistant to the deputy commander of the United States Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, presents 92-year-old Maralee Schwab the Medal of Honor during a ceremony in the Memorial Chamber of the State Capitol building in Lincoln June 7. Schwab's late husband, 1st Lt. Donald K. Schwab, was awarded the medal almost 70 years after performing heroic acts during combat operations against an armed enemy near Lure, France, on Sept. 17, 1944.

soldier with the butt of his rifle and dragged him back behind friendly lines, surviving a barrage of enemy gunfire. His actions so disorganized the resistance that the enemy withdrew. This episode of selfless heroism dismantled a strong German position, aiding the Allied front.

1st Lt. Schwab was wounded three times on active duty but continued to serve in the U.S. Army until Oct. 26, 1945. For his heroism he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts during his tour of duty.

Schwab returned to the family farm in Hooper and later worked as a rural mail carrier.

In 2002 Congress passed legislation that prompted a review of Jewish American and Hispanic American veteran war records from World II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. During the review, records of several other Soldiers were also found to display criteria worthy of the Medal of Honor. At a White House ceremony on March 18, 2014, 24 men were recognized for their gallantry, intrepidity, and heroism above and beyond



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Honor: Service members with Nebraska ties who were awarded the Medal of Honor are memorialized in the Memorial Chamber of the Nebraska State Capitol building in Lincoln.

the call of duty. Donald Schwab was among the seven service members from World War II to be so honored. Maralee was not able to travel to Washington, but she watched the presentation on the TV at a senior care center in Hooper.

A second, similar ceremony was held in Pilger, Neb., a few weeks later, during which Maj. Gen. Michael Navrkal, 35th Infantry Division commander, presented the medal to Schwab's widow during a school assembly.

In all, only 3,487 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of all military services and the Coast Guard – 21 Nebraskans have been awarded the medal. From World War II, 474 Medals of Honor were awarded; five of those went to Nebraskans, including Schwab.

"Donald really should have been here for this," Maralee whispered as the Medal of Honor plaque was unveiled to reveal 1st Lt. Schwab's name. Donald died at age 86 in 2005.

World War I-era cannon moved to new Guard Museum

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Staff Photojournalist

A large artifact from the Nebraska National Guard Museum was moved out of the Nebraska National Guard State Arsenal Museum Building in Lincoln, Neb., on May 22 to make the move to its new home in Seward, Nebraska.

The Nebraska National Guard announced in February that its museum would have a new home in the state's "4th of July City," Seward, Neb. Since the current location at the State Arsenal Building was being vacated to make way for the University of Nebraska's Innovation Campus.

The three-inch M1902 Field Gun is the largest and heaviest artifact that will be inside the museum.

With a team of Nebraska National Guardsmen and University of Nebraska-Lincoln contractors, the nearly 3,000-pound piece of history managed to fit through the back door of the arsenal as a large piece of equipment picked up the cannon and moved it onto a trailer.

"It's not like we don't have the equipment to move it and we had all intentions to move it ourselves," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 K.C. Sohl. "It was just a good help that UNL had their equipment."

Sohl said that it wouldn't have been possible without the Soldiers.

"The Soldiers are always willing to help anybody," said Sohl. "It's all about community involvement and helping one another."

It was a group effort to make sure everything went as planned with the movement of the cannon.

"It feels great that we had so much help moving it and we did it safely," said Gerald Meyer, Nebraska Military Department state historian. "I'm very impressed with the crew of Soldiers and volunteers that helped to get it out and over to Seward and placed in the new museum."

The breech-loading, air cooled



Teamwork: Lt. Col. Andrew Kelly and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Clyne work together, May 22, to move a wheel of a World War I cannon from the Nebraska National Guard State Arsenal Museum Building so it can make it to its new home in Seward, Neb.

cannon has been in the museum since 1989. It was used by the U.S. Army from 1902 until the 1920s. It was used for training purposes by a four-person crew.

"The cannon was refurbished by the National Guard in the late 1980s after spending time outdoors in Ashland," said Meyer. "It's a testament to the professionalism and expertise of the restoration crew to get it back to firing condition."

It looks like it just rolled off the assembly line," added Meyer. "They put a lot of time and effort to make it look this good."

The cannon officially made it to Seward on May 27. Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers and volunteers helped the cannon make it off the trailer and into its new home.

"It feels great to have it in Seward," said Meyer. "I'm glad it is safely over in the new museum. Our job now is to incorporate it into the new museum displays in Seward."

Soldiers and volunteers are currently in the process of moving all



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

There She Goes: A World War I-era cannon from the Nebraska National Guard State Arsenal Museum Building is lifted to be placed on a trailer May 22, before it is taken to its new home in Seward, Neb. The cannon is one of more than 10,000 artifacts that will be displayed or stored in the new museum.



Handle with Care: A 3-inch M1902 Field Gun wheel is lowered carefully by Nebraska Army National Guardsmen, May 22, in Lincoln, Neb. The cannon was disassembled for its trip to Seward, Neb., and was reassembled the next day as one of the first pieces of history to be placed in the new museum.

the artifacts from Lincoln to their new home in Seward.

"We have over 10,000 artifacts

that are being moved to Seward," said Meyer. "That's a lot of history to being moved."

The cannon will remain one of the staples for the Nebraska National Guard museum.

"This is one of 22 known field guns of this type in existence," said Meyer. "We are looking at a 'Before WWI' training display or possibly have it located in the Learning Center for students to actually touch and operate some of the mechanisms on the piece."

"Wherever it goes in the museum it will be done to tell our story as it involves the Nebraska National Guard from using it for training prior to World War I to how it got to Ashland for display to how we refurbished it and placed it in the Arsenal to now being on display in Seward," added Meyer.

The museum will officially open during the summer of 2016. Look for museum updates in upcoming issues of the *Prairie Soldier*.



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Last Rights: Members of the Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team practice pulling a flag-draped casket out of a hearse during a funeral rehearsal at the “Spirt of 1776” Armory in Lincoln, Neb., May 22. The Nebraska MFH Team performs approximately 1,100 services a year honoring deceased Nebraska service members.

HONORS continued from page 1.

Guard Military Funeral Honors Team has been performing the ceremonial paying of respect and the final demonstration of the country’s gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended the nation.

The MFH program in Nebraska conducts approximately 1,100 of these services statewide each year. The Soldiers in the program volunteer for the duty and are held to a very high standard of conduct and appearance.

Conducting the funeral honors is a well-choreographed display of precision and professionalism – and that precision doesn’t come easy. The team practices their routine and hones their skills almost daily.

The Nebraska National Guard’s Military Funeral Honors Team conducted a funeral rehearsal on May 22 at the “Spirt of 1776” Armory in Lincoln, Neb.

During the training, members of the MFH Team practiced many of the steps performed during a military funeral including the American flag fold and playing of Taps, the six-person pall bear and six-person flag fold.

“The Soldiers in this program do a fantastic job of paying final honors to our nation’s veterans,” said Michael Jimerson, MFH state coordinator. “This is a reminder of one small gesture we can make to commemorate the service of men and women who have served our nation.” “All these Soldiers that we’ve buried in the past, they’ve served our country honorably and faithfully, so we just want to give them their last rights,” said Sgt. Taylor Siebrant, a Nebraska MRH Team trainer. “We want to go out there and make it look as professional as possible and give them the respects they deserve.” Siebrandt, who has been in the Nebraska National Guard for just over six years, said as soon as he saw another Soldier with the Honor Guard tab on the left shoulder of another Soldier, he was hooked.

Like other Honor Guard members, he received 40 hours of training for the certification, but also trained at the Professional Education Center in Little Rock, Arkansas – the same place Soldiers working at Arlington National Cemetery train. He is now certified to train the Nebraska MFH Team.

Siebrandt and his team often perform multiple ceremonies daily, but his small group can’t handle all of the requests throughout Nebraska by themselves. For that they rely on five regional zones throughout Nebraska with teams based in Lincoln, Omaha, Kearney, Norfolk and Scottsbluff.

According to Siebrandt, the Nebraska National Guard MFH Team will perform last rights for a veteran of any branch of service; however, branches other than the Army have the “right of first refusal.” For example, if a veteran served in the Air Force, the Air Force would be the service first asked to perform final rights. If the Air Force team is unable to perform the ceremony, the Nebraska Army National Guard MFH Team is more than willing to perform the ceremony.

“If they want to be buried inside the state of Nebraska and they want the Army to do it, we’ll be the ones who are there,” said Siebrandt.

With the Nebraska National Guard being a community-based organization, citizens throughout the state get to see first-hand the dedication and professionalism the MFH Team provides in their time of need. “It’s the face of the Guard, so you’ve got to put your best foot forward,” said Jimerson. “We’re out there. We see the families and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion...and they see that the Guard is a viable asset. Nebraska is a big state and we have teams in five different zones, so we go from Omaha to Scottsbluff. So I think it’s important that the public gets up close and personal with our guys.”



Practice Makes Perfect: Members of the Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team practice folding the American flag during a rehearsal at the “Spirt of 1776” Armory in Lincoln, Neb., May 22.



Patchwork: A member of the Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team stands next to a practice casket after folding the American flag during a funeral rehearsal at the “Spirt of 1776” Armory in Lincoln, Neb., May 22. Each member of the Nebraska MFH Team is a member of the Nebraska National Guard Honor Guard and has undergone many hours of training to perfect the precision military funerals require.



Precision: Members of the Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team lower a practice casket onto a mock burial site lowering device during a rehearsal at the “Spirt of 1776” Armory in Lincoln, Neb., May 22.

“Everyone is coming together for that service and they see the professionalism that we bring every day,” said Siebrandt. “That’s another reason we hold ourselves to that higher standard.” “The families and the communities see how professional we are and they expect that from the rest of the Nebraska National Guard,” he added. “I think it just puts a good word out for the Nebraska National Guard.” But despite the professionalism shown by the MFH Team during services, helping pay last respects to veterans is emotional for team

members. “It’s a great honor,” said Siebrandt. “It doesn’t matter who the deceased was, every time I go out to do a service I feel, in a weird way, almost overjoyed because I’m allowed to be the one who pays those last respects.” And although the work the MFH Team does is for the veteran, it often means more for the grieving family. “I think it probably helps with the grieving process,” said Siebrandt. “We’re doing this mission for the deceased – the veteran – who greatly deserved it...he’s gone, but his family is still here. When the family gets to sit there and see that in a way he

even touched our lives because he joined the military and just to see that some complete stranger that they don’t know comes up and pays respect for their loved one...I think it warms people’s hearts and I’m glad to do that.” It’s especially emotional when a family member thanks a MFH Team member personally. “There’s no better feeling really, when we get done with a great service and we’re walking back – we’re big on ceremonial composure – but sometimes when we get close to our transportation I can’t help but start smiling because that was awesome,” said Siebrandt. “And then when the family member comes over... it’s just a feeling you can’t beat. Almost unexplainable how it kind of melts you, but at the same time it lifts you up.” Jimerson agreed. “It can get emotional for us even though you can’t show it,” said Jimerson. “But these are fellow veterans so it means a lot when you have a family member come up and tell you thank-you.” “Soldiers pay a heavy toll in a lot of different ways,” he added. “I don’t think it’s too much to ask to have somebody come to your service that day. They’ve earned it.” For more information on scheduling a service or joining the Nebraska National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team, contact Michael Jimerson at 402-309-7329 or michael.e.jimerson3.ctr@mail.mil.



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Loading Up: Pfc. Trevor Coufal, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 2, 1057th Transportation Company, tosses a log onto his truck trailer while making adjustments to his load of lumber, June 14, while training in the Black of South Dakota during Golden Coyote, a major National Guard exercise conducted there and at Camp Guernsey in June. The Nebraska Soldiers were preparing to haul lumber to Native American reservations located in South Dakota.

Annual Training 2014

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Soldiers from the 1057th Transportation Company 'logged' some well-earned miles in June when they participated in a major transportation mission during their two-week annual training in South Dakota.

The Nebraska Army National Guardsmen from Chadron, Scottsbluff and Sidney spent a significant portion of their June 7-21 annual training moving logs from the forests of the Black Hills to Native American reservations as part of Golden Coyote, a major National Guard exercise conducted throughout western South Dakota and Camp Guernsey, Wyo. This year's Golden Coyote involved more than 4,400 service members from 15 states and five allied nations.

According to Capt. Timothy Buskirk, 1057th Trans. Co. commander who works for the U.S. Forestry Service in Chadron, Neb., in civilian life, his goal for his unit's annual training this year was pretty simple: "Provide some realistic training, No. 1, with the timber hauling mission... getting our trucks (and) our drivers exercises hauling real loads, tying them down and all those kinds of things within their (military occupational specialty)," he said.

"Secondarily, we wanted to do a lot of the training lanes out here, such as the combatives course or the leaders reaction course... some of those things that we can't do as easily or as well facilitated at home

Logging miles in South Dakota

station," Buskirk added.

Buskirk said the timber-haul mission, which allowed his truck drivers to haul loads of timber from the national forests and Custer State Park in the Black Hills down primitive and rugged logging roads and over highly traveled paved highways out to local and regional Native American reservations, definitely fit the bill. Like other Guard transportation companies, the 1057th Trans. Co. drivers rarely get the opportunity to transport actual cargo with their trucks outside of annual training, so Golden Coyote was a significant event for the unit.

"It's great," said Buskirk. "We get to do everything from loading up real loads, to tying them down, hauling them down busy highways and then, almost as importantly, working through our contacts at the Native American reservations, lining up the drop offs and those kinds of things."

"It's just the full mission from front to back."

The Soldiers definitely seemed to appreciate the opportunity.

"So far, the training's been great," said Sgt. Fernando Rodriguez, a load master from Scottsbluff's Detachment 2, 1057th Trans. Co., as he secured a load of logs to his trailer while also watching as a group of South Dakota Army National Guard engineers loaded additional logs onto other Nebraska trucks. "It's letting everyone know what life is like (during these types of missions)... A lot of the young

troops are learning a lot more than they ever thought possible."

Spc. Daniel Holquin agreed. A truck driver from Scottsbluff, Holquin said the opportunity to participate in an actual transportation mission that would ultimately help Native Americans fuel their homes during the long upcoming winter months was "a lot of fun."

"We're just having a lot of fun doing a lot of good training, lots of driving.... It's a good experience," he said.

Holquin said the training that he and his fellow Soldiers were receiving in South Dakota was irreplaceable. "Our first mission as a Soldier is to fight and defend our country, but we're truck drivers, so the best way to get the training is actually doing it hands-on. (This mission) is a lot of hands-on and I like it. It's getting us out of the armory and seeing new places."

Spc. Zachary Sherfey agreed. "I'm getting a whole lot of driver's training," said Sherfey, smiling as he worked to tie down the seemingly ever-shifting logs onto his trailer so that they wouldn't tumble off the flatbed during the upcoming drive down a single lane dirt logging trail. "I'm also getting to help out (people). The Guard plays a big role in helping people and I'm proud to be part of it."

Sgt. 1st Class William Dewitt, a platoon sergeant from Sidney, Neb., who works as a bridge foreman for Burlington Northern/Sante Fe Railway in civilian life, said that's exactly the types of experience he



On The Move: A lumber laden truck from the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1057th Transportation Company makes its way down a trail, DATE, near Hill City, S.D.



Final Adjustments: A member of the 1057th Transportation Company straps down a load of lumber while participating in a lumber hauling mission in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Nebraska Army National Guard officials from the 1057th Transportation Company said the training the Nebraska Soldiers received during the lumber hauling mission will help them prepare for future transportation missions.



Everything Ready? Sgt. Fernando Rodriguez, a load master from Scottsbluff's Detachment 2, 1057th Transportation Company, inspects straps and a load of logs prior to moving out from the lumber loading spot located in the forested hills above Hill City, S.D.

and other unit leaders were hoping their Soldiers would take away from this year's annual training.

"This has been outstanding training. There's not better training for my guys than what they're getting here."

That, in turn, should create lasting dividends, said Buskirk.

"Truck drivers want to drive trucks and we're getting them out there in their trucks," he said, adding that the drivers he talked to were truly excited by mission. "And we're also getting an opportunity to do those Soldier things that we can't do at home."

"I think we will get a lot out of it."



Piled High: Sgt. 1st Class Lillie Chambers, 313th Medical Company, stores donated items in a room in her basement to be delivered at a later date when need arises. She said that many people have government assistance to buy food items, but not other essential household items.

Giving Back

■Staff sergeant creates food bank, additional charities for those in need

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Writer

It was obvious that the elderly woman was having difficulty navigating the steps to the apartment where her two, six-month-old grandbabies eagerly awaited her return. She explained the toddlers were left in her care after her daughter was sent to prison a few months ago.

The 75-year-old woman's recent battle with breast cancer and a double mastectomy had left her visibly scarred. An even more recent knee replacement made it next to impossible for her to navigate the steps leading to here home.

The woman had recently moved to Lincoln and her paperwork for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program hadn't been processed yet. Thankfully, a Nebraska National Guard Soldier stepped up and delivered food, which turned out to be all she had until SNAP kicked in.

Inspired by the lyrics of a country song and fond memories of her late grandparents, Staff Sgt. Lillie Chambers, 313st Medical Company of the Nebraska Army National Guard, conceived the idea of a food bank that delivers food and other necessities to people who had fallen on hard times.

"I got the idea when I was doing dishes and the song 'Home' by Miranda Lambert came on the radio," said Chambers, who is also a wife and mother of three. "It reminded me of my grandma and grandpa – they were my best friends. They had really big hearts and through their actions taught me to give to others and to help people in need no matter their circumstances."

Her grandparents had five children of their own, but were also foster parents. In all, 17 people call them mom and dad, she said, adding that before she was born they owned and operated a café called Mom's Kitchen, which became the namesake for her food pantry.

"They passed away eight years ago in August, but when that song came on it reminded me of them and I knew I wanted to help my community out in a bigger way," said Chambers.

The idea of service before self, which Chambers' grandparents instilled in her, was intensified when she happened upon a National Guard booth at a career fair while she was in middle school. From the moment she talked to the recruiter and got her picture taken in front of the National Guard Humvee, Lillie said she wanted to commit her life to serving others.

"The bottom line was that I wanted to help in some way," she said.

She still keeps that photo as a reminder of her commitment to her country and her local community.

Armed with a dream but no idea how to run a food pantry, Chambers called the Lincoln Food Bank to see if there was even a need for a food pantry in the area and to ask for advice on how to go about running one. At first she ran the pantry from her gymnastics studio in downtown Bennett, Neb., where people could stop by and pick up items they needed. But when she moved her studio to the basement of the local bank, traffic decreased dramatically.

"People don't want everyone to know they need assistance," said Chambers, adding it became clear to her that the pantry was not going to have as much of an impact in the new location. So, after talking to her husband, Chambers moved the pantry into her house and started delivering items to people in need.

"When someone calls I can grab what they need out of the basement and take it to them instead of going all the way downtown," she said.

Over the past several years Mom's Food Pantry has provided food items and household goods to people in many different situations. When she gets a call, the first thing she asks is if they have children and how many. That way she knows how much and what types of food to bring.

Recently, Chambers delivered to a mother and father of three. Together they earn just enough to disqualify them from SNAP, but not enough to provide food for everyone now that school is out and the children are home for the summer.

"During the school year they don't need assistance, but it's tough for many families to make ends meet during the summer months," said Chambers.

Mom's Food Pantry doesn't only provide food items. It also provides other much-needed household essentials. Some people on SNAP have plenty of food, but are not able to purchase other essential non-food items, Chambers said. One woman called and said she had all the food in the world, but couldn't keep her dentures in to eat it because she couldn't afford denture glue. Chambers used some cash she received as a donation and bought a case of denture glue.

Chambers said she believes in helping people no matter their personal situations. She is frequently asked how she knows if the people calling really need help.

"People wouldn't be calling me if



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

On The Job: Sgt. 1st Class Lillie Chambers, 313th Medical Company, prepares military clothing for turn-in where she works at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb. Chambers knew she would join the Nebraska Army National Guard after talking to a recruiter when she was in the eighth grade.



Family Affair: Sgt. 1st Class Lillie Chambers, 313th Medical Company, sits on her front porch with her two daughters, Bella (right) and Bettie (left). Chambers said her daughters are old enough to understand the value of giving back to those in need and they are a great help with Mom's Food Pantry.

they didn't really need some help," she said. "I have a 'no questions asked' motto."

"I've delivered to mothers and fathers who have smart phones, nice cars and are dressed well, but you can't judge people by their appearance," she added. "I have no idea what their story is or what's happening in their lives. If they are calling me, then they need the help."

"It is really important to help out your neighbors no matter who they are. You have no idea what's behind that Lexus or behind that \$200,000 house or behind that \$50,000 house. We have no idea what their story is and that's why it's important to listen and say, 'yep, I've got this for you.' If you have the means then why not help out?" she said. "You never know, you may be the next one to fall on hard times."

And sometimes those non-food items go even farther.

One mom called and she needed two car seats because she was leaving her abusive husband that night. He had taken the existing car seats so she couldn't take the kids and leave. She had everything prior to leaving including money and a nice car. Getting out of that situation meant she had to leave in a hurry leaving everything behind but what she could fit in the car. After hearing the story, Chambers rounded up two car seats and a gas card and met the woman at a nearby gas station.

"At the end of the day people are trying to do the best thing for their families and do the right thing," said Chambers. "I don't think I've had anyone abuse my services."

"As a society, I think it is really

important that we always look out and help one another," she added. "Our actions and words should always be loving, kind and helpful. I think it's very important as citizens, neighbors and as parents that we lead by example and let the younger generations see our actions and words affect other people."

Chambers said her two daughters, Bettie, 7, and Bella, 5, are starting to get the idea, but Tucker, 3, is still a bit young to understand.

The same year she started Mom's Food Pantry, Chambers expanded on her dream by organizing a clothing drive for parents with kids going back to school. Later that year, based on an idea from her cousin, she organized a toy drive for the holidays. Although the turnout for both wasn't very large the first year, she said it was really neat to know children were going to have school clothes and Christmas was going to be possible for a few more families that year.

After the first year, Chambers decided to focus on the winter holidays combining the toy and clothing drives into one large event in December, which she named Santa's Overflow.

She said the event is basically a large garage sale without price tags. It features everything from clothing for children and adults, to diapers and household goods. She collects items throughout the year and holds the event in the Bennett School gymnasium.

"People come all the way from Grand Island to come to Santa's Overflow," she said. "Last year we had 100 people standing outside the door waiting for us to open and we

had over 5,000 items. Everything was gone within 10 minutes with the exception of a few trash bags full of clothing and we donated them to another charity."

Chambers credits the success of Mom's Food Pantry and Santa's Overflow to the generosity of the people living in her local community. Organizations ranging from the Lutheran Ladies to the American Legion to the Bennett Post Office have donated to her charities. Members of the Nebraska National Guard have also donated their time to help put items on hangers leading up to the Santa's Overflow.

For the past two years a very generous anonymous donor has donated more than 200 brand new coats and two truckloads of new toys to Santa's Overflow.

"He literally came to my house and just dropped it all off," she said. "It's amazing something like this can bring a community together."

Although running the pantry throughout the year is time consuming, Chambers said the real chaos starts in October and November.

"In November, my house gets really crazy," said Chambers. "The first two years, we had only a path in our house. If you did not know what I was doing, you'd think I was a hoarder."

In the months leading up to Santa's Overflow, people leave the donated items on her porch. She then cleans, sorts and stores them in her basement until December, but people can still request clothing items throughout the year.

"If someone needs clothing items during the rest of the year, I will look through what I have and get them what they need anytime of the year," she said.

Last year Chambers borrowed a cousin's moving truck and stored items in it instead of her home. The outside storage made it easier for her to transport the items to the school in December. The truck is not available this year; however, and she looking to purchase one.

"If anyone knows where I can find a truck or is looking to donate items, please contact Mom's Food Pantry via Facebook," she said. (<https://www.facebook.com/moms-foodpantry>).

It's worth the hard work and time to watch people get back on their feet, said Chambers. "It's especially rewarding to see people I help come full circle and start helping others even while they are still not completely self-sufficient. A lot of people I drop off food to will bring me clothes that don't fit their kids anymore so that I can redistribute them to others in need. It's really nice to see people pay it forward."



Guard Family NEWS

You Can Use



Raising Cash

Chicken fingers restaurant donates phone cards, cash to Nebraska Guard

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

The Nebraska National Guard was presented with a donation for the Headquarters Operation Fund from the owners of the Lincoln, Nebraska, Raising Cane's restaurants during a ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln, June 13.

Jennifer and Justin Jones, along with their children and additional family, presented Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general with a check for \$7,021.84. That money will directly assist Nebraska Soldiers, Airmen and their families.

In addition to the operation fund donation, the Joneses donated nearly 1,700 60-minute phone cards to the Nebraska National Guard to allow deployed Guardsmen to call home free of charge.

This is the sixth year Raising Cane's has donated phone cards and is a result of their Cell Phones for Soldiers program, which runs

throughout April.

The number of phone cards was almost three times the amount raised last year. This also marked the second year for the operation fund donation and was more than double last year's amount.

Bohac thanked the Joneses for their support and said the donations help Soldiers and Airmen stay connected to their families and communities. "Our connection to the community is what makes us strong."

"Without that kind of support we simply cannot do what we do each and every day," he added.

Justin Jones said when he and his wife moved to Lincoln in 2006, one of their first goals was to become deeply rooted into the community and donating to a community-based organization like the Nebraska National Guard was the best way they could give back to the community.

The Joneses were presented with a certificate of appreciation for all of their support.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Check It Out: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, accepts a donation for the Headquarters Operation Fund from the owners of the Lincoln, Nebraska, Raising Cane's restaurants, Jennifer and Justin Jones, during a ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln June 13. In addition to the operation fund donation, Raising Cane's also donated nearly 1,700 60-minute phone cards for deployed Guardsmen.

MWR summer recreation activities open to troops, families

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – With summer just beginning, Defense Department officials want to remind service members and their families that low- to no-cost fitness and recreation opportunities exist to maintain military family readiness, a morale, welfare and recreation official said June 24.

Chris Wright, MWR program analyst with DoD's military community and family policy office, emphasized how feeling healthy and fit contributes to personal and professional success, which is essential to national security.

"MWR has been linked to readiness – it

helps build resilience in service members and family members and builds esprit de corps within units," Wright said. "That's tied directly to staying fit and promoting healthy lifestyles and to (help) the service member fight mentally and physically."

The summer activities program also is open to DoD civilians, he added.

Within the United States and at overseas installations, MWR offers services and equipment for travel, camping, boating, events and other services, Wright said.

Some of the free summer activities include

passes to military members and their families at any federal park in the United States, and free access to 1,800 museums across the nation through Blue Star Museums, in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Arts.

DoD's Online Library, open year-round, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, is a summer resource for education and recreational purposes and offers Internet access.

Equipment rentals from MWR include camping equipment with all the necessities, jet skis, canoes, kayaks and other boats

and water-sports equipment, depending on installation location.

DoD Summer Camps are conducted across the country for youth, teens and adults for camping trips, outdoor adventure programs and kayaking and canoeing for adults. Day camps are offered for children.

"We encourage people to check out the programs," Wright said. "DoD has a big focus on healthy living with opportunities to get involved in local MWR programs. There is a lot available to service members and families, from good nutrition to fitness."

Support tools released for post-concussion sleep issues

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — Officials at the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center have released new clinical recommendations and support tools to assist in the identification and treatment of a sleep disturbance occurring in patients after a concussion.

The suite of products assists health care providers in the identification of a sleep problem and provides recommendations for its treatment, officials said.

"Sleep disorders are common after a person sustains a concussion," said Col. (Dr.) Sidney Hinds II, DVBIC's national director. "The prompt identification and treatment of sleep disorders are an important part of the recovery process for concussion. Sleep is critical to the brain's healing and recovery processes. Research shows that if sleep is regular and adequate, restorative processes are promoted."

Since 2000, more than 300,000 U.S. service members have suffered a traumatic brain injury. Common sleep disorders associated with TBI include insomnia, circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorder and obstructive sleep apnea. Insomnia is the most common sleep disturbance after concussion, center officials said.

The new Management of Sleep Disturbances following Acute Concussion/Mild TBI Clinical Recommendations suite is composed of

clinical recommendations, a clinical support tool a provider-education slide deck and a patient-education fact sheet.

"These clinical recommendations advise that all patients with concussion symptoms should be screened for the presence of a sleep disorder," said U.S. Public Health Service Capt. Cynthia Spells, DVBIC's clinical affairs officer.

"Patients should be asked if they are experiencing frequent difficulty in falling or staying asleep, excessive daytime sleepiness or unusual events during sleep. The initial step in the diagnosis of a sleep disorder includes a focused sleep assessment."

Nonpharmacological measures to treat insomnia that focus on stimulus control and good sleep hygiene are the preferred methods of treatment, officials said. Short-term use of sleep medication may be necessary in addition to these measures if they are not effective by themselves, they added.

Spells said stimulus control means controlling the environment to help promote sleep. Examples of stimulus control measures include relaxing before bedtime, going to bed only when sleepy, getting out of bed when unable to sleep, removing electronics such as the TV, smartphone and computer from the bedroom and using the bedroom only

for sleep and intimacy.

Sleep hygiene habits include avoiding caffeine and other stimulants close to bedtime, daily physical activity without exercising close to bedtime, arising at the same time every morning, getting natural light exposure every day, and avoiding alcohol, nicotine and large meals close to bedtime.

Spells said the new sleep disturbance clinical recommendations and support tool product suite was developed by the Defense Department in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs and civilian medical professionals.

"Although tailored for the military and VA health care systems, these recommendations may be used by civilian health care providers treating concussion-associated sleep disorders," Spells said.

"Many service members and veterans, especially those serving in the National Guard and Reserve, receive care from civilian health care specialists."

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center serves as the Defense Department's subject-matter expert on TBI and as DoD's manager of the TBI pathway of care. The center is part of the Military Health System and is the TBI operational component of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Defense Department officials emphasizing summer safety

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – As the summer season approached, the Defense Department is redoubling its efforts to promote safety and emphasize responsibility to all service members and their families, DoD's director of personnel risk reduction said May 22.

During a joint interview with the American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel, Leonard Litton discussed the department's efforts to reinforce caution during the "Critical Days of Summer."

"The theme for this summer is doing the right thing for the right reasons," Litton said. "And (Defense) Secretary (Chuck Hagel) reiterated that because the summer safety season is an important season for safety. We do tend to lose anywhere from 80 to 100 of our service members during this period of time."

Accidents and ensuing loss, he said, occur mainly because of summer outdoor activities such as riding motorcycles, boating, parasailing and other warm-weather leisure pursuits.

"Some of those activities tend to have a little bit more risk associated with them," Litton said.

Litton explained the importance of the "Critical Days of Summer" safety campaign and why DoD emphasizes caution and careful consideration of summertime activities. "Generally we look at those (days) from the Memorial Day holiday through the Labor Day holiday — those 101 days that span that time period," he said.

"There's a lot of travel that goes on," Litton said. "Folks are generally taking their vacations. Schools are out, and so sometimes folks may try to drive a little too far (without adequate rest)."

People also may try to drive when the weather's not very good, he said, and sometimes outdoor events are attended where alcohol is involved, which may lead to poor choices in performing activities requiring "a lot of mental focus or a high level of dexterity."

Litton encourages service members to seek additional information of safety and risk mitigation activities -- beginning at their units.

"Almost all commanders and supervisors are trained in safety and risk mitigation activities," he said. "Almost all units will have a safety officer or a safety NCO."

PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard
Lieutenant Colonel

Dale A. Krueger
Robert M. Volpert
Benjamin P. York

Major

Stephen A. Marquez
Matthew C. Misfeldt
Andrew J. Nelson
Jeremy K. Smith
Jonathan D. D. Wymer

Captain

David M. Easterday
Andrew B. Iler
David R. Koesters
Mark E. McClure
Paul A. Proctor
Christopher J. Rees
Brian R. Riekenberg
Blake A. Rippe

First Lieutenant

Noah M. Kakaya
Avery L. Walker
Trent A. Wilson

Chief Warrant Officer Five

Teresa A. Domeier

Chief Warrant Officer Three

Keal S. Bockelman
Chad M. Bruce
Jake A. Edwards
Jennifer D. Fotinos
Tollie H. Yoder

Sergeant Major

Jeffrey L. Rowell
Kenneth R. Winn

Sergeant First Class

Craig J. Alderton
George B. Goodon Jr.
Jeremie D. Steinbach

Staff Sergeant

John A. Carothers

Benjamin J. Cornish
Scott C. Spofford
Sarah J. Sturges
Benjamin J. Sudtelgte
Rodney R. Svoboda
Christopher Talavat
Matthew T. Williams

Sergeant

Bradley K. Bieck
Ryan S. Crum
Marco A. Flores
Jonathan J. Harre
Chad V. Levi
Nikolaus J. McCracken
Seth C. McDougall
Loc T. Nguyen
Michael J. Ogarro
Ty A. Schoenefeld
Holly M. Styskal
Leah M. Uhing
Dianna L. Wright
Jonathan J. Young

Specialist

Alexander J. Ayres
Cody A. Baker
Dracy L. Bender
Nicholas J. Boatright
Tyler A. Burnett
William T. Bushhausen
Garrett T. Bussen
Brandon G. Cook
Luke A. Davidson
Robert J. Fike
Kellan B. Garber
Dalton C. Goodwin
Tanner A. Gubbels
Cody R. Hamling
Jacob D. Harrer
Joshua M. Holm
Steven H. Hope
Jonas Houessou
Camden J. Jones
Kyle S. Kelley
Craig R. Kimball
Ian P. Lamb
Donte L. Lee
Jared E. Legier

Justin L. Lomison
Daniel G. Morales
Chris D. Neumiller
Isaac N. Opfer
Jeremiah M. Orr
Dewey J. Page
James F. Parker
Justin S. Pritchard
Blake E. A. Reppert
Thomas B. Roth
Charles J. Royce
Otis E. Seiler
Zackery W. Sherfey
Ernest W. Short
Cynthia L. Sokol
Tyler W. Stefanski
Spencer A. Sydow
Caleb C. Tallent
Dillon C. Wadenman
Adam M. Weisenberger
Taylor R. Willoughby

Private First Class

Major Armstead
Jimmy Barajasmorales
Marisela Castillonegrete
Stephen M. Cornell
Cody L. Cosner
Jose A. Garcia
Ryan T. Green
Claudia P. Hernandezpedraza
Anthony B. Hostler
Levi D. Kaiser
Corey W. Klassen
Dayton C. Rasmussen
John M. Reining
Brian T. Stodola
Dallas A. Straight

Private Two

Matthew A. Arthur
Michael C. Fischer
Jose A. Gonzalez

Tarin J. Hanson
Amber L. Holly
Nyayan J. Koung
Nathan J. Meyers
Christopher Quintana
Donald E. Stivers Jr.

Air National Guard
Major

Christy M. Fetzer
Elizabeth R. Micek
James L. Otte
Stephen M. Parra
Michael J. Schmit

First Lieutenant

Corrina J. Bartels
James O. Fox

Senior Master Sergeant

Tonja A. Buchholz
Kimberly A. Davila

Master Sergeant

Paul E. Feltes III
Joshua G. Sears

Technical Sergeant

Patrick M. Lillis
Evan E. Littrell
Carson S. Pollard

Staff Sergeant

Kristopher P. Bousquet
Vincent P. Carroll

Senior Airman

Devin T. Davila
Sean A. Nelson

Airman First Class

Dominique N. Johnson
Aleisha R. Stanford

AWARDS

Army National Guard
Meritorious Service Medal

Command Sgt. Maj. Wilfred J. Uhing
Sgt. 1st Class Bonnie D. Frazier

Army Commendation Medal

Capt. Russell L. Bartholow
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Courtney L. Miller
Staff Sgt. Randall W. Barnason
Staff Sgt. William J. Thurmond
Staff Sgt. Derek S. Westring
Sgt. Kyle D. Mostrom

Army Achievement Medal

1st Lt. Veronica L. Jones
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brandon L. Bennett
Sgt. 1st Class Gregory A. Brown
Staff Sgt. Randall W. Barnason
Staff Sgt. Tanner K. Hippen
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey J. Wagner
Sgt. David P. James
Spc. Erik J. Campbell

Spc. Jason A. Royal
Pfc. Ryan T. Green
Pfc. Zachary C. Pedersen
Pfc. Devon J. Taylor
Pvt. Jay G. Bicking

Nebraska National Guard
Individual Achievement Medal

Capt. Christopher D. Lopes
Capt. Shawn M. Robinson
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Keal S. Bockelman
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Stephen C. Gonifas
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Paul A. Robinson
Sgt. 1st Class William D. Jacobsen
Sgt. 1st Class Landen C. Koopman
Sgt. David L. Munoz
Sgt. Michael N. Springer
Spc. Austin C. Dutcher
Spc. Justin L. Lomison
Spc. Jacob M. Ohl
Spc. Michael S. Wiederspan

RETIREMENTS

Army National Guard

Lt. Col. Guy F. Moon
1st Lt. Anthony W. Hayden
Chief Warrant Officer 5 John F. Regan
Command Sgt. Maj. Troy D. Johnson
Command Sgt. Maj. Boyd L. Navratil
Sgt. Maj. Mark W. Carlson
1st Sgt. Scott D. Bates
1st Sgt. Matthew F. Dorsey
Master Sgt. Gregory J. Clement
Master Sgt. Dennis J. Holm
Sgt. 1st Class Michelle L. Bade
Sgt. 1st Class Emmet E. Barta
Sgt. 1st Class Richard S. Barndfas
Sgt. 1st Class Byron J. Davis
Sgt. 1st Class Albert N. Koesters Jr.
Sgt. 1st Class Daniel J. Murphy
Sgt. 1st Class Rod S. Planer

Sgt. 1st Class William R. Snelling
Sgt. 1st Class David L. Stanek
Sgt. 1st Class Michael W. Victor
Staff Sgt. Donn G. Eddy
Staff Sgt. Jesse L. Herman Jr.
Staff Sgt. Troy K. Legg
Staff Sgt. Kevin McKinney
Staff Sgt. Wayne B. Morgan
Staff Sgt. Steve A. Nelson
Staff Sgt. Brett M. Vance
Staff Sgt. Larry J. Wiese
Staff Sgt. Jeffry L. Wilkins
Sgt. Joshua P. Casebeer
Sgt. Thomas H. Loos
Spc. Daniel E. McPherson
Spc. Abraham E. Mori
Spc. Kenneth L. Zabokrtsky
Pfc. EmmyLou A. O'Brien

Shorttakes

Nebraska National Guard helps welcome new U.S. citizens

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Staff Writter

Remarks by Maj. Gen. Daryl L. Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general honored the journey of 40 immigrants as they swore an oath of allegiance to their new nation, May 15, at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. “It is really an honor for us today to host this event at Joint Force Headquarters, but more importantly it is an absolutely privilege to be a part of such a significant event in each of your journeys to become a citizen of the United States,” said Bohac. “In the Nebraska National Guard we strive to have our membership and workforce reflect the cultural diversity of the communities we serve.”

The Nebraska National Guard has 52 Soldiers and 18 Airmen who are naturalized U.S. citizens, he added.

“You all have chosen to become citizens and serve your fellow citizens,” said Bohac. “Through this service we share a common bond with each of you. On behalf of the Nebraska Military Department, congratulations and best of luck in your future endeavors as our newest citizens of the United States of America.”

United States Magistrate Judge, the honorable Cheryl R. Zwart administered the oath of citizenship.

Hosting the naturalization ceremony was a first for the Nebraska National Guard and aligns with Bohac’s top priorities—diversity, inclusion and getting out into the community, said Col. Anita Curington, chairperson for the Special Emphasis Program for the Nebraska National Guard.

“What better way to welcome the new citizens within the Lincoln community by hosting a naturalization ceremony to welcome them to the U.S. as citizens and demonstrate how the National Guard is incorporated



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

New Citizens: The newest American citizens cover their hearts as the national anthem is sung during a naturalization ceremony, May 15, at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb. Hosting the ceremony was a first for the Nebraska Guard and aligns with Guard top priorities—diversity, inclusion and community,

into the community and that we are truly citizen Soldiers,” she said.

Citizen candidates came from 19 countries and ranged in age from young adults to senior citizens.

Among those taking the oath was Suwimon Smith, the spouse of Staff Sgt. Matthew Smith, a paralegal at the 155th Air Refueling Wing. Suwimon was born in Thailand and immigrated to the U.S. in 2000 to attend school, but put that on hold to run a family business. She has since completed beauty school and owns her own business in Bellevue, Neb., which is where Matthew met her. Matthew joined the Nebraska Air National Guard in February after serving as a linguist in the active duty Air Force.

Suwimon completed the citizenship application process only two days prior to the ceremony, but was told she would have to wait six weeks until she could be naturalized. Matthew found out about the Guard’s hosting of the ceremony and was able to get Suwimon on the list to be naturalized at the ceremony.

“Family is the best choice of words for describing the Guard,” Matthew said, reflecting on the Nebraska

National Guard’s involvement in the expedition of his wife’s naturalization. “I haven’t felt more welcome at any other unit than I have here. It means a lot seeing my wife move through the process. Knowing how much work she’s put into getting to this point makes me very proud.”

“I am very excited,” said Suwimon. “I now have my name and picture on that little paper and it feels good. I feel like today was just kind of different... Because of my husband and the Nebraska National Guard I was able to be naturalized within two days instead of six weeks.”

The two have been married four years and are expecting their first child in November.

Also speaking at the ceremony was Lincoln businessman, Emsud Deumic, a Bosnian immigrant and now U.S. citizen. He welcomed the new citizens and shared his naturalization experience offering a bit of advice to them.

“The United States gives you everything,” he said. “You just work hard—work full-time, part-time and all the time. God Bless America and welcome to the United States.”

New leadership at NEMA

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

State Public Affairs Officer

The former head of the Nebraska State Patrol has been tapped by Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, to become the next assistant director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Bryan Tuma, who served as the Nebraska State Patrol’s superintendent from 2005-2011, will assume the post of assistant director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency from current director Al Berndt, who retired at the end of June after having served in the post since being appointed by the late Maj. Gen. Stanley M. Heng in March 2000.

Tuma most recently served as the safety coordinator for Dupont Pioneer.

“Bryan brings a blend of experiences to the position of assistant director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency that will ensure a smooth transition. I am impressed with his knowledge of state government and his past experience in emergency management as the superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol,” said Bohac, who as the Nebraska Military Department adjutant general, also serves as the director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. “I look forward to working with Bryan in serving the citizens of the State of Nebraska.”

A native of Columbus and a 1977 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a major in Criminal Justice, Tuma was commissioned in the Nebraska State Patrol in 1979. He went on to serve in a variety of command assignments before being named to command the Nebraska State

Patrol by Gov. Dave Heineman in May 2005.

At the time of his selection, Tuma served on the Governor’s Leadership Group on Terrorism and as the Nebraska State Patrol’s point of contact on the coordination of homeland security efforts within NEMA. Tuma is also a 1993 graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy.

Tuma said he’s eager to join the staff of NEMA.

“I am looking forward to working with the staff at NEMA and continuing to address the emergency management and homeland security issues of the state of Nebraska,” Tuma said. “The partnerships with local, state and federal representatives are critical to the effective response in Nebraska and I want to continue to strengthen those relationships.”

In following Berndt as assistant director, Tuma will assume a senior leadership role in NEMA. Tuma will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency and overseeing the state’s response to state and federally declared disasters and emergencies.

During Berndt’s tenure as assistant director, he successfully oversaw the state’s response to numerous emergencies, including tornadoes, floods and widespread wildfire outbreaks. Berndt was also credited with starting Nebraska’s homeland security program.

“Al Berndt has done an incredible job in leading the day-to-day operations of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. I have benefited tremendously in working with him. His service to the citizens, local emergency managers and the state has been nothing short of amazing,” said Bohac. “We all owe him a debt of gratitude for his unwavering commitment to the safety and welfare of all citizens of our great state.”

(Editor’s Note: Jodie Fawl contributed to this article.)



Tuma

Guard says farewell to long-time pilot, general

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

One of the earliest members of the Nebraska Air National Guard was laid to rest with full military honors, June 11, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Retired Brig. Gen. Lloyd Johnson, a World War II aviator who later became one of the Nebraska Air Guard's earliest pilots, died on June 6 in Lincoln. He was 90.

"He was kind. He was thoughtful. He was understanding. He was loyal," said Johnson's grandson, Ben, during the late general's funeral. "He embodied the values that we all too often take for granted – honor, duty, the importance of standing up for God, family and country."

"His leadership, his tenacity, his wisdom contributed to the growth of the organization," added retired Maj. Gen. Edward Binder, former Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, who served with Johnson.

Johnson was born on Oct. 9, 1923, in Oakdale, Nebraska. According to Ben Johnson, in December 1940 the future Nebraska Air Guard general and a cousin traveled to Omaha with the goal of joining the U.S. Navy to become flyers. When that didn't work out, they simply crossed the street and enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Johnson completed Air Corps pilot training as a member of Class 44D and then shipped off to



Lloyd Johnson, World War II

England aboard the Queen Mary. Once in England, Johnson and 19 other pilots were assigned to the 9th Army Air Force's 50th Fighter Group, which was based first in Lyon, France, and then later at a small airfield in Toul/Ochey, near Nancy, France.

While in Europe, Johnson completed 99 combat missions as a P-47 Thunderbolt pilot, shooting down four enemy aircraft including a German ME 262 jet fighter.

In a December 2005 *Prairie Soldier* article, Johnson recalled his wartime service. Living conditions were rudimentary. The unit lived in tents. The airfield was carved out of a small patch of forest. "It was a metal runway that engineers had to puzzle together. It was kind of primitive, but it worked," he said.

Johnson and about 100 fellow



Top photos courtesy of Ben Johnson

At The Controls: The future Brig. Gen. Lloyd Johnson sits at the controls of a Nebraska Air National Guard F-86D fighter in the 1950s. Johnson would go on to one day serve as the Nebraska Air Guard's chief of staff.

aviators were part of three squadrons based at the airfield. They flew three kinds of missions: escorting bombers and other aircraft; locating and engaging enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground, and close air support with the 7th Army.

According to Johnson, their base was just 20 to 50 miles from the front. They had to be prepared to move or get overrun. "We had German night-fighters over our base every night," said Johnson, adding that the British battled the Germans at night. "We could not fly at night."

From September 1944 to March 1945, Johnson flew combat missions in the P-47 - which became one of the most famous American fighter planes in World War II. He said the lethal aircraft was the biggest single fighter aircraft in the world.

Johnson's first aerial victory involved a ME-109, which he shot down on Dec. 31, 1944, during a fighter sweep involving 16 American airplanes. "We went to German air bases to draw the enemy up and get in fights... it worked. We ran into probably 50 ME-109s and German Foch-Wulf FW-190 fighter aircraft."

"We'd meet them head on. It was every man for himself. We shot down about six of theirs. At one point, I saw one of them was on my leader's tail. I was trying to protect my leader, so I shot down the ME-109. The pilot bailed out," Johnson said.

His second formal victory happened during a big dogfight involving about 40 airplanes nearly 300 miles into Germany. He was close to a German FW-190.

"When I rolled out, he was right

in front of me. I fired, the aircraft blew up and he was pulverized. That could have easily been reversed," Johnson said.

There were also some near misses. During one flight in France while looking for "targets of opportunity," Johnson's engine suddenly quit. "If you're at 10,000 feet and the engine quits, you're going to land, bail out or belly in (slang for a gear-up landing). So I looked for a field," Johnson said. "Landing in the field, my left wing had dug into the ground, but finally the aircraft stopped."

"My wingman, who was still above me, could see that someone was coming out to the grain field I landed in. They were French civilians. They came up to me and all they could say was, 'Meems.' What they were trying to tell me was I had landed in a minefield. My wing was digging up mines all along."

While sitting in the field, a truck with American G.I.s went to help him. "Their truck started into the field where I was, hit a mine and blew up. They were about a quarter-of-a-mile away when their truck blew up. We heard it."

"The drivers were okay, but they had been told if they'd ever damaged a truck in the normal line of duty or in an accident where it was their fault, they'd have to pay for it," Johnson said. Fortunately, he added, they didn't have to pay for the truck.

Following the war, Johnson returned to Nebraska. In 1949 he joined the Nebraska Air National Guard's fledgling 173rd Fighter Squadron, flying the unit's P-51

Mustang. He would later fly all of the unit's other aircraft including the F-80 Shooting Star, F-86D Super Sabre, the C-47 Skytrain (known affectionately as the Gooneybird), C-45 Expeditor, C-54 Skymaster and the C-131 Samaritan.

Johnson also attended Nebraska Wesleyan, where he lettered in football and basketball, and met his future wife, Barbara Engel. He completed college at the University of Nebraska with a bachelor's degree in Science.

He was activated during the Korean Conflict, after which he landed a full-time job with the Nebraska Air Guard in 1953. Johnson retired in 1983.

"I probably had the best job in the Air Guard. I got to fly, rub shoulders with all the governors whom I knew by their first names, which was 'Governor.'"

According to Ben Johnson, among the missions Johnson was assigned included flying to Wyoming to pick up Charles Starkweather, a notorious serial killer, who was actually returned to Nebraska aboard a different aircraft, as well as transporting the governors of Nebraska and Iowa to Washington, D.C., following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Johnson also served as the first state chairman of the Department of Defense Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Johnson was an avid sports fan and racquetball player. He was a life member of the Air Force Association, Rotary International, American Legion Post #3, founding member and chairman of the 9th Air Force Association, Fleet Admiral of the Nebraska Admirals Association, and member of the Big Red Sub Club.

The University of Nebraska ROTC's Joyce-Johnson Squadron is named in honor of Johnson and Richard Joyce.

Johnson is survived by his wife of 67 years, Barbara, three children, eight grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

According to Ben, his grandfather was always a warm and generous man who lived an amazing life.

"For most children, their imaginations are driven by the magical heroic exploits of comic book movie heroes," said Johnson. "But some of us had quite a different experience. (He was) our hero... our Superman."

(Editor's Note: Retired Chief Master Sgt. Vicky Cerino contributed to this article.)



Final Respects: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, presents an American flag to Barbara Johnson, wife of the late Brig. Gen. Lloyd Johnson, June 11, in Lincoln, Neb.

ID information, Nebraska Military Retiree Council golf tournament

Hello from your Retiree Council Executive Committee! We remain committed to support retirees and surviving spouses of retirees with their questions concerning retirement issues. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance. We'll get you to the right person to help you!

As you may have read, there were numerous bills introduced and passed during the last legislative session. I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to continue to support efforts which benefit retirees. You need to make your voice heard when it comes to benefits, including retirement exemptions, etc. If you're not sure who your senator is, contact us and we'll get you the information you need.

We've received a lot of questions concerning renewing ID cards. Information is again listed in the article on the locations where you can get ID cards renewed for yourself or family. Please, do not delay when it comes time to renew. Your ID card is your access to Tri-Care.

Are you a golfer? We are hosting the second annual NMRC 4-person scramble at the Syracuse Country Club on Aug. 23. Tee off at 9 a.m. Cost is \$40 per person (\$50 with cart) and gets you 18 holes of golf, lunch, and prizes! The tournament

Nebraska National Guard Retiree News & Notes

By retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 William Nelson

is open to all retirees, currently serving members, and their spouses. Come and enjoy the day with fellow retirees and friends.

The Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs website is at <http://www.veterans.nebraska.gov/>

Visit the site to find out what's happening with veterans affairs in Nebraska. It also provides links to many other sites of interest.

The recent retiree briefing in Kearney was a success and it appears there may be another briefing later this year in the eastern part of the state. Stay tuned for more details as to date/location/etc. It's not firm at this time, but we are working diligently on your behalf.

If you want specific information on any retirement issue, please contact us and we'll do the research for you. Our contact numbers are 402-309-7303 or 402-309-7305.

Finally, best wishes to Sgt. 1st

Class (Ret) Bonnie Frazier, who has joined our ranks, and Staff Sgt. Mandy Hatcher, who has left the program. Both did an outstanding job taking care of retirees and we wish them both well in their new roles. Their replacements are Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn and Sgt. Craig Hoppes.

Thank you for your dedicated service to the National Guard and this great country.

If you like to rise early to meet fellow retirees and share stories, here's the breakfast site information for those in the immediate areas:

Lincoln:

Army National Guard retirees: **FIRST** Monday of each month, 7:00 AM, Virginia's Travelers Café, 3820 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln

Air National Guard retirees: **LAST** Monday of each month, 7:00 AM, Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th St, Lincoln

DEERS/ID Card Stations

- G1 - 2433 N.W. 24th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-8167/8168/8169;
- "Spirit of 1776" Armory 1776 N. 10th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 (402) 309-7359/7373;
- Penterman Armory at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln (402) 309-1724/1719;
- Air Guard (Lincoln Air Base) Bldg 600 Room E209: (402) 309-1542;
- Norfolk Armory 817 S. 1st St. Norfolk, NE 68701 (402) 309-8900/8908;

- Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003, (402) 309-7809/7628;
- Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-2374;
- The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

Remember, you need two forms of ID when you arrive for your appointment.

North Platte area retirees: **SECOND** Saturday of each month, 8:00 AM, Airport Inn, North Platte

If any other towns have retiree breakfasts and want to share that information, please let us know and we'll add you to the list so others can join you.

From the desk of Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn. Greetings, retirees. I am the new Retirement Services NCO, replacing Sgt. 1st Class Bonnie Frazier, who has retired and joined your ranks. My phone number is (402) 309-8162 and email address is Vincent.e.luhn.mil@

mail.mil. My new assistant is Sgt. Craig Hoppes, who may be reached at (402) 309-8159 or craig.d.hoppes.mil@mail.mil. We are located in the Joint Force Headquarters Building at the Nebraska National Guard air base, 2433 NW 24th St, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Your Tri-Care manager is Staff Sgt. Travis Garrett and he may be reached at 402-309-1541 or travis.s.garrett.mil@mail.mil.

Contact him for all your Tri-Care related questions. The United Health Care for Military and Veterans phone number is 1-877-988-9378.

Street Talk

“What does the 4th of July mean to you?”



Spc. Justin Grimm
Detachment 2,
1057th Transportation Company
“Independence Day to me is a celebration of us being free — a free nation. And I’m proud to fight for that country.”

1st Lt. Kathryn Score
155th Medical Group
“The 4th of July to me is about honoring the legacy of those before me and remembering the freedom that America gained and continues to fight for.”



Airman Morgan Hurley
155th Medical Group
“It makes me feel patriotic to serve this country and to be part of a nation that fought so hard for its freedom.”

Pfc. Michaela Metcalf
Detachment 2,
1057th Transportation Company
“Taking pride in my country.”



**Airman 1st Class
Corey Iltzch**
155th Maintenance Squadron
“It’s a great time to go out and celebrate America...and it’s my friend’s birthday.”

Balancing life as a Guard member

As we train through 2014 I can’t help but be reminded of how much we get done on a drill weekend and during annual training. Year after year our Soldiers and Airmen do extraordinary things, both on and off duty with very limited and valuable personal time. Thanks for all you do!

At the height of the annual training season life can be extremely busy. It can also be an extremely rewarding time for your military career as you gain valuable experience. However, others in your life may not feel the same way you do, especially with respect to your family and civilian career.

Our current operational tempo can tax the best relationships and careers. There are some things you can do to give your life a bit more harmony. Good communication can help manage expectations and avoid some conflicts.

5 Tips to keep it in Balance

1. Your time is valuable. Fostering a good working relationship requires talking early and often about how to avoid conflicts with your personal, military and work schedules.

Share your inactive duty training (IDT) and annual training calendar with your family and employer. Scheduling conflicts usually don’t get better with time. Print several copies for your family and employer. When you give it to them tell them, “This is the truth as I know it today.” Things can change, but this will serve as a good state-

ment of your commitment to them and your respect for their time as well as communicate your Guard requirements.

2. Talk about your experience when you go back to work. Tell your boss or fellow workers the kind of work that you do. Remember if they know nothing about the National Guard they may think you were goofing off all weekend getting caught up on your sleep. Tell them you had to get up at 4 a.m. many days or maybe perform night-vision goggle training after midnight on others. Their best impression of the National Guard is only as good as the last story they heard. Hopefully it wasn’t about “Summer Camp” in the good ole days.

3. Leave the drill sergeant style communication in the armory with your ruck sack. Before you step back into the house take a deep breath and remember you are a civilian again. Oh come on, you know what I am talking about. If you have ever heard, “Hey! I am not one of your Soldiers,” then you certainly know what I am talking about. If you haven’t heard that before, well then good for you. I was a slow learner.

4. Physical fitness matters. You don’t have to run five miles a day or max your fitness test. However,



Brigadier General
Deputy Adjutant General
Rick Dahlman

you should be trying something to stay fit. To some the idea of exercise is filling the tub, pulling the plug and fighting the current. If you are doing your push ups, sit ups and run when you can, it makes a huge difference. Starting with the smallest of exercise often leads up to a full workout. Absolutely max your fitness test if you can. If you are at least trying you will do better on the test and feel better about yourself. Try.

5. Recognize things are going to go wrong. Remember you are a skilled professional who lives by the Soldier’s or Airman’s Creed and our values. Call another Soldier to talk through a problem. (I still do this today.) Remember you are a valued member of our team. When you treat others with dignity and respect it makes you feel even better. The basics matter too; manage sleep, diet and hunt the good stuff when the chips are down. This will help you bounce back to thrive and be even stronger for your family and fellow Soldiers when you are needed most.

It doesn’t matter if you have been in the National Guard for two years or 20 years. Striking a great balance will make the difference between making the most of your service in the National Guard or making up to your spouse because you forgot to tell her you had drill this weekend. I do believe that there is time to do almost all of the things you want to in your life. You just can’t do them all at once. A good balance will help to achieve as much as you can without a lot of drama.

Brig. Gen. Lloyd Johnson, countless others blazed paths for us all to follow

The Nebraska National Guard experienced a significant loss this past June when retired Brig. Gen. Lloyd Johnson, former Nebraska Air National Guard chief of staff, died after a lengthy illness.

General Johnson was 90 at the time of his death on June 6, 2014.

June 6, 2014, was also the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings during World War II.

General Johnson’s death was yet another of a World War II veteran... deaths that are unfortunately all too common as the Greatest Generation’s ranks continue to thin as time rages on.

Their passing is all of our collective loss.

From a personal side, General Johnson’s death was a sad blow. Back when I first started working for the Nebraska Military Department in 1992, General Johnson had already retired after an amazing military career. Yet, like all so many of his generation, he continued to serve on as the state chairman of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

It was through this role that the general’s and my paths would frequently cross.

Often – sometimes monthly or even weekly – General Johnson would stop into the Public Affairs Office to talk with my boss, the late retired Lt. Col. Leonard Krenk. Often, as the work of the day was concluded, conversations would frequently turn to “war stories” as the two of them would exchange anecdotes about the early Nebraska National Guard, or General Johnson would recall some of his exploits from World War II.

Needless to say, as a young twenty-something, I felt extremely privileged to be able to listen in on these stories, always learning something that I hadn’t known before. It was through these exchanges, which

sometimes would also include other World War II veterans or the late Maj. Gen. Stanley Heng, that my knowledge about the U.S. military in general and the Nebraska National Guard specifically deepened and matured.

In later years, I would occasionally see General Johnson at some Guard event or another and he always seemed to have time for a friendly greeting or a short conversation. This also helped deepen in me what it means to be a leader because for an officer of his stature to take time out to remember and talk with me, it meant a lot personally.

Following General Johnson’s funeral, I spent quite a bit of time thinking about him and the other World War II veterans that I have had the fortune to meet and talk with over my life. I also started thinking about how very few of those people are left.

I still have a hard time shaking this strange feeling of sadness and gratitude.

Let me explain further.

Following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, much was said about the fact that today’s generation of military men and women would become known as the next or second “Greatest Generation.” To this day, I don’t disagree with the fact that many, many American citizens rallied to the nation’s call following the attacks and that they served and continue to serve admirably in some of the most extreme and dangerous conditions imaginable.

Yet, I also believe that this generation has only reached the halfway mark as defined by those who served during World War



My Turn
State Public Affairs Officer
Kevin J. Hynes

II. That’s because the “Greatest Generation” isn’t known for just what they did during the war, but equally for what they accomplished following it.

In his book by the same name, Tom Brokaw defined these accomplishments:

“When the war was over, the men and women who had been involved, in uniform and in civilian capacities, joined in joyous and short-lived celebrations, then immediately began the task of rebuilding their lives and the world they wanted. They were mature beyond their years, tempered by what they had been through, disciplined by their military training and sacrifices.”

“They married in record numbers and gave birth to another distinctive generation, the Baby Boomers. They stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honor, and faith. They were a new kind of army now, moving onto the landscapes of industry, science, art, public policy, all the fields of American life, bringing to them the same passions and discipline that had served them so well during the war.”

As I look around and reflect upon the accomplishments of this great group of Americans, it is this enduring monument that I find as equally impressive as their wartime exploits.

In a sense, it seems to me, that this is the next legacy that we, as a generation, have to live up to.

When I think back on all that General Johnson and those like him accomplished both during their time at war and the years that followed, this is the true trail that they blazed for us.

If we are indeed to become the next “Greatest Generation,” we still have much work to do. Fortunately, we have a guide to follow... a guide created by people like Brig. Gen. Lloyd Johnson, Maj. Gen. Francis Greenleaf, and millions of others.

Worth Repeating

July 4, 1776: Philadelphia, Penn., The Declaration of Independence is adopted by members of the Second Continental Congress. What started 18 months earlier at Lexington and Concord as “embattled (militia) farmers” standing against the seizure of their property led to this day of forever breaking from all ties with Great Britain.

Source: National Guard Bureau

Guard leader retires

■Maj. Gen. David Petersen completes 42- year career

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Almost 42 years to the day that he was drafted into the U.S. Army, the Nebraska Army National Guard's Maj. Gen. David Petersen was honored before a large crowd of family members, co-workers and friends.

Petersen, who last served as the mobilization assistant to the deputy commander of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, was also presented with the Defense Distinguished Service Medal by Adm. Cecil D. Haney, commander of the U.S. Stratcom, during the June 7 retirement ceremony held at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska.

"This is a happy day," said Petersen, shortly after the formal retirement ceremony ended. "This has been a ton of fun."

Petersen began his military career in June 1972 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army as an engineer. After serving on active duty for more than three years, Petersen transferred to the Nebraska Army National Guard in March 1976. He then graduated from the Nebraska Army National Guard Officer Candidate School at Camp Ashland in May 1979, after which he was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

During the course of Petersen's career, he served as a platoon leader, company commander, commander of the Guard's Training site, director of maintenance, director of facilities, deputy chief of staff for plans and operations and deputy chief of staff for the



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Well Earned Honors: Admiral Cecil D. Haney, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, presents Maj. Gen. David Petersen with the Defense Distinguished Service Medal during Petersen's retirement ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., on June 7. Petersen retired after 42-year career.

Nebraska National Guard's joint staff.

From February 2007 until March 2009, he served as the commander of the Nebraska Army Guard's 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, following which he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general following his assignment as the assistant division commander of the 35th Infantry Division at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

In November 2009, Petersen transferred west when he was named the deputy commanding general (rear) of the 1st Infantry

Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, serving there until May 2011.

According to Petersen, the Fort Riley assignment helped build a stronger tie between the active Army and the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. "What we did back there really showed, I believe, what the Reserve Component and the Guard can do."

Following his Fort Riley stint, Petersen was reassigned to U.S. Stratcom.

Petersen is also a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom, serving in Gardez, Afghanistan, from September 2005 until December



Final Folds: Maj. Gen. David Petersen watches as member of the Offutt Air Force Base Honor Guard fold an American flag, which was presented to Petersen in honor of his 42-year military career that concluded that the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., on June 7.

2006 as the senior regional police advisor – East, Element Joint Force Headquarters Forward 15.

Petersen is a 1979 graduate of Kearney State College, where he earned a bachelor of Science

degree in Industrial Arts, and a 2001 graduate of the National War College where he earned a master of Science degree in National Security Strategy. Petersen and his wife, Karen, live in Lincoln.

92nd Troop Command welcomes new command sergeant major

By Sgt. Riley Huskey
Staff Writer

After nearly 20 months of dedicated leadership, Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Johnson passed the charge of 92nd Troop Command to Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker during a change of responsibility ceremony on April 5 at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Spending the majority of his military career in aviation, Johnson, 52, plans to retire and said he was happy to end his military career of 33 years with the "tip of the spear."

"Coming to Troop Command allowed me to see the bigger picture," Johnson said. "It was an awesome experience to see other Soldiers doing so many different things. That was my joy with this experience because had I not been placed here, I would have never got to see and experience what I did."

Johnson began his military career in the Navy in late 1980, where he served for five years. Since joining the Nebraska National Guard he has held several positions including command sergeant major of the 1-376th Aviation Battalion from 2007 to 2012, and first sergeant of Company B, 2-135th from 2005 to 2007.

"Retiring for me is about no longer having to tell my family, 'I can't do that,'" Johnson said. "You think about retirement a lot, but when it finally gets here...wow."

Baker joins Troop Command after serving the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron and 867th Quartermaster Battalion as command sergeant major. Baker brings a wealth of leadership skills and knowledge,



Photos by Sgt. Riely Huskey

New Lead: Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, 92nd Troop Command's command sergeant major, holds Troop Command's sword during an April 5 change of responsibility ceremony in Lincoln, Neb. Baker took responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Johnson.

Johnson said.

"While the future budget remains one of our greatest challenges, the business side of the Army has not changed – we fight and win wars," Baker said. "It is my, and our, mission to accept and help manage this change. I will work with leadership and continue to move Troop Command forward."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Johnson only had a few words for the incoming command sergeant major.

"I don't know if it's advice, because we both share and understand this, but I would stress that this is not about us," Johnson said. "It's about the people that fill up our formations. As long as you always keep that in mind, you can't help but be successful."

"I am convinced now that the Nebraska Army National Guard is full of outstanding Soldiers – across the ranks and across the skillsets."



Johnson



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

It's Official: Col. Daniel A. Kenkel receives his formal certificate of retirement from Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, May 3, at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb. Kenkel served more than three decades and retired as the Nebraska Army National Guard chief of staff.

Nebraska Guard chief of staff retires

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Writer

After more than three decades of service, Col. Daniel A. Kenkel of the Nebraska Army National Guard, received his formal certificate of retirement, May 3, in front his colleagues and his family at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Maj. Gen. Darryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presided over the ceremony and thanked Kenkel for the years of service he committed to his state and country. Bohac described Kenkel as a man of passion who was fiercely committed to his Soldiers and family.

"He was always willing to tell me and other leaders when the emperor wasn't wearing any clothes – to ensure that the best interest of the organization be served," said Bohac. "As the adjutant general, it was a privilege to have served with you, and I will always be proud to say I served with Daniel Kenkel."

"It was a privilege and honor to serve with each one of you," Kenkel said, addressing

Guard members in the crowd. "In American culture, success is commonly attributed to four things: native ability, effort, difficulty of task and luck. Over the past few weeks I've spent some time reflecting on the four segments of my career and they all came down to one thing—luck. Lucky to have joined in 1981, lucky to have served with the numerous Airmen, Soldiers and civilians throughout my career and real luck and fortune to be blessed with a great spouse and kids."

Kenkel's military career began in 1981 when he enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard. He went on to receive his commission from the Nebraska Army National Guard Officer Candidate School program in June of 1987. Over the course of his 30-plus year career, Kenkel served in a wide variety of leadership positions including an assignment to the National Guard Bureau in 2007. He was appointed to the position of Nebraska Army National Guard chief of staff in September 2011 where he served until his retirement.

Kenkel lives in Lincoln with his wife, Julianne and three children.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Mad Dash: The first wave of nearly 12,000 runners begin the 37th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon held May 4 in Lincoln, Neb. More than 170 National Guard runners representing nearly every U.S. state and territory used the annual race to attempt to qualify for the 40 male and 15 female spots on the All Guard Marathon Team.

2014 Lincoln National Guard Marathon

Nearly 12,000 runners hit Lincoln’s streets

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Writer

A Pennsylvania Air National Guard woman made history at the 37th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 4, when she became the first National Guard woman to win the marathon’s overall female category.

Senior Airman Emily Shertzer, an oboist with the 553rd Band of the Mid-Atlantic, carved her name in history while sprinting across the finish line at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Memorial Stadium in an official time of 2 hours, 50 minutes, 36 seconds. Shertzer held a comfortable lead over Capt. Varinka Ensminger, a medical services officer with the Kentucky Army National Guard, who placed second in the National Guard woman’s category and ninth out of all females with a time of 3:07:05.

“The last few years I came I wasn’t very well prepared...this year I really wanted to focus on Lincoln and maybe try to win it,” said Shertzer, who led the pack of female competitors for the duration. “I didn’t realize I was the first Guard woman to win overall. It’s pretty exciting to be the first woman to win overall in Lincoln. There are a lot of faster female marathoners out there, but today it’s nice to be the top woman here in Lincoln.”

Taking the first place title in the National Guard’s men’s division was Sgt. Alex Sico, a radio and communications security repairer with the 3650th Maintenance Company from the Colorado Army National Guard, finishing with a time of 2:39:20. Close on his heels was 1st Lt. Kenneth Rayner, a platoon leader from the Massachusetts Army National Guard, finishing with a time of 2:40:30. Sico’s time was good for sixth place out of all



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Providing Drinks, Motivation: Sgt. Peter Lass, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 313th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), offers a drink and some motivation to a passing marathon runner during the Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 4.

male marathoners.

According to Sico, who was competing in only his second marathon, he wasn’t sure what to expect at this year’s Lincoln National Guard Marathon, which was held under partly cloudy skies.

“It was a little bit windy and it got kind of lonely on the second half after all of the half marathoners dropped off,” said Sico. “There was a runner hanging close behind me for the last two miles, so I sprinted like I’ve never sprinted before. After leading for the whole race, I didn’t want to give that up.”

More than 12,000 marathoners registered for this year’s marathon (up from 10,000 in 2013) in less than 18 hours, making this year’s Lincoln National Guard marathon the largest in its history. Among those athletes, 174 intrepid marathoners from the Army and

Air National Guard representing 39 states and two U.S. territories tackled the grueling 26.2-mile challenge to compete for a position on the All Guard Marathon team and a chance for their team to take home the Traveling Cob—the newly unveiled traveling corn cob trophy for National Guard team with the best overall time.

The team with the best time average of their top three runners, and winners of the inaugural Cob trophy, was the team from Pennsylvania. With an average time of 2:51:59. The Pennsylvania runners edged out second place Wisconsin, with Indiana rounding out the top three.

“I’m thrilled to be hosting the National Guard Marathon time trials again,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hagen, National Guard

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Pennsylvania Air Guard female makes Guard marathon history

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
Staff Writer

In Oct. 1923, Memorial Stadium—the home of the Nebraska Cornhuskers—was dedicated to Nebraska service members who made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

The proverbial “Cathedral of College Football” has since hosted some of the greatest testaments to athletic accomplishment during the 20th century.

On May 4, Senior Airman Emily Shertzer, a musician with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard’s 533rd Band of the Mid-Atlantic, became the first female Guardswoman to win female division of the Lincoln National Guard Marathon.

“It’s pretty exciting to be the first woman to win overall in Lincoln,” said the former Air Force female athlete of the year. “... It’s nice to be the top woman.”

Not only did Shertzer top all other women runners, she edged out 184 registered National Guard members to place 6th overall with a time of 2:50:36—a personal best.

“It’s pretty amazing,” said Shertzer. “I didn’t realize that a Guardsman hadn’t won on the women’s side before.”

Shertzer, a former Moravian College runner, is now setting her sights on the World Military Marathon Championship in Netherlands this October.

“Based on how I ran the Marine (Marathon) last year, I qualified for (Conseil International du Sport Militaire),” said Shertzer. “I’ll be headed for the



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

Making History: Senior Airman Emily Shertzer from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard nears the finish line of the 37th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 4. Shertzer made history becoming the first National Guard female to win the entire race for females with a time of 2:50:36.

the Netherlands.”

Already an accomplished athlete with a seemingly bright future, Shertzer hasn’t lost sight of the military esprit de corps and camaraderie that comes with events like marathon running.

“You’re representing the Army and the Air from all different states” she said. “It’s exciting to see everybody.”

Nebraska National Guard marathon team ups their game

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach and
Staff Sgt. James Lieth
Staff Writers

Sweat, competition and the desire to compete filled the crisp spring air as nearly 12,000 runners filled the streets of downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, preparing to complete the 37th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 4.

Within a marathon there are several competitions. Runners not only compete against one another, but against themselves, as they endure the grueling 26.2 miles. Thirty-nine states and two territories were represented by 174 Army and Air National Guardsmen, to include five members of the Nebraska National Guard team. These National Guard members were a part of their own competition.

“This marathon represents the qualifier for the National Guard marathon program, for the runners to be named to the All-Guard marathon team,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hagen, National Guard Bureau marathon coordinator. “At the finish line there will be a race. People will come in exhausted, blank stare in their face, and their first question is, ‘what number was I?’ It’s the thrill of making the team and that is what they are here for, to bring that title, All-Guard marathon, back to their state.”

Members who qualify for the All-Guard Marathon Team have the privilege of representing the National Guard, throughout the year, in several races across the country. The competition is not only an individual competition to make the All-Guard team, but also a team competition between National Guard state teams.

“A state can have as many runners as they bring but only the top three will count. They take an average of those times,” said Hagen. “The lowest average is the winner.”

Four Soldiers and one Airman represented the 2014 Nebraska Army and Air National Guard marathon team. They finished with a team average time of 3 hours, 10 minutes and 21 seconds, giving them a top-ten ranking, finishing in sixth place. This is a strong improvement from 2013, when they finished in 12th place.

Sgt. 1st Class Bill Norris, Nebraska National Guard team captain said, the Nebraska team is growing and gaining strength each year.

“We are headed in the right direction; we are getting there,” said Norris. “It is hard. We are a small state and it is hard to get runners, but I think we are doing a good job marketing ourselves. We are getting stronger each year. I am



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

On Pace: Army 1st Lt. Travis Kirchner, 313th Medical Company, runs the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 4. Kirchner set the pace for the Nebraska National Guard marathon team with his time of 3 hours, 2 minutes and 57 seconds.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Walk In The Park: Air Force Maj. Karl Duerk, 170th Group, enjoys the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 4. Duerk’s time of 3 hours, 5 minutes and 2 seconds helped place the Nebraska National Guard marathon team in sixth place, up from 12th last year.

happy about that and the runners are too. We are looking forward to next year already.”

As a team, they have accomplished a lot with this race. Remarkably, four out of the five Nebraska team members qualified for the All-Guard Marathon Team. They ranked 6th out of the 25 National Guard teams racing. Team member, Robb Campbell, age 40, placed 6th



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Team Pride: Maj. Karl Duerk, 170th Group, Staff Sgt. Jacob Krause, 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, Capt. Avery Sides, 155th Medical Group, 1st Lt. Travis Kirchner, 313th Medical Company, Capt. Robb Campbell, Detachment 2, Company A, 35th Infantry Division and Sgt. 1st Class Bill Norris (kneeling), team captain, pose for a team photo. The Nebraska team improved to sixth place from 12th last year.

out of the 111 runners in his age group. With all these accomplishments, the Nebraska team is already planning for next year. Norris and the team have several goals.

“My goal is for every Airmen and every Soldier in the state to know about this program,” said Norris. “I would like to have 15 to 20 people on our team. My goal is to finish number one. It’s going to be hard, it’s going to take some time, but we do have some great runners in this state.”

Currently, the Nebraska team has 10 runners. In order to qualify for the team, men under the age of 40 must have completed a marathon within the last year at a time of four hours or less. A man age 40 and older must complete it in 4 hours and 15 minutes. Women of any age may qualify for the team after completing it in 4 hours and 30 minutes. Although the standards for qualifying are demanding, training for a marathon can present its own challenges such as weather and injuries.

“It has been very hard for these runners to get out there and train,” said Norris. “It was a very cold winter, very brutal, very windy, very dry... and for them to be able to commit like that and train-up is pretty amazing. It is hard work and it takes a toll on the body.”

Not all of the Nebraska National Guard team was able to participate. Their team suffered three injuries,

one temporary duty assignment, and one member was returning from the Boston Marathon just two weeks earlier. The Nebraska team battled cold weather and multiple injuries throughout the year, but they fought through the challenges and were rewarded for their commitment.

“It is awesome. It is neat to hear everyone on the side yelling ‘go Guard,’ giving you a thumbs up and cheering you on,” said Air Force Maj. Karl Duerk, an instructor pilot for the 170th Group, Offutt Air Force Base, and a member of the Nebraska National Guard marathon team. “It is a privilege to be able to wear the uniform out here with the other men and women. I hope it gets people more interested and asking questions about what we do and how we get to come out here and wear the Guard uniform.”

Regardless if one is a marathon runner for the National Guard team or racing as an individual, there is always one thing to remember, said Hagen.

“It is mind over matter. It is one foot in front of the other, dig down, grit your teeth, just do it, and I’ll see you at the finish line,” said Hagen.

If interested in running for the Nebraska National Guard marathon team, please contact the team captain, Army Sgt. 1st Class Bill Norris via email: nautica6068@yahoo.com or cell: (402) 310-7866.

Team Results

- 1. Pennsylvania
- 2. Wisconsin
- 3. Indiana
- 4. Washington
- 5. New Mexico
- 6. Nebraska
- 7. North Dakota
- 8. Arkansas
- 9. Kentucky
- 10. South Dakota
- 11. Texas
- 12. Ohio
- 13. Utah
- 14. Hawaii
- 15. Rhode Island
- 16. Alaska
- 17. Colorado
- 18. Idaho
- 19. Virginia
- 20. Arizona
- 21. Iowa
- 22. California
- 23. West Virginia
- 24. Tennessee
- 25. Guam

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Bureau Marathon coordinator. “Even more so because today is by far the best weather I’ve ever seen for this marathon—minus the wind, of course.”

For Guard participants this year’s marathon was much more competitive than it’s been in previous years due to a more active recruiting venture by the states to pick the top runners Hagen said.

“That’s why we have a lot of new Guard athletes,” he said. “The energy this year was higher than it’s ever been—on the Lincoln Track Club side and in the Guard – because of all the new participants. I’m excited to see how they all finished and how they feel about the race.”

Hagen added that the Nebraska National Guard, which founded the marathon several decades ago, takes significant pride in the marathon. “Everyone who comes here sees it as a reflection of what the Nebraska National Guard does and how hard we work.”

Colorado Guardsman sets pace for National Guard male runners

By Sgt. Jason Drager
Staff Writer

The 37th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon was held May 4, in Lincoln, Nebraska. The course began near 15th and Vine Streets, and ended with runners crossing the 50-yard line inside Memorial Stadium on the campus of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Approximately 12,000 runners from around the world came to Lincoln to participate in the event. Among them were National Guard members from 39 states and two territories hoping to land a spot on the All-Guard Marathon Team.

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon has the proud distinction of being the qualifying race for the All-Guard Team, which

is made up of the top 40 males and 15 females..

Sgt. Alex Sico, a radio and communications security repairer with the 3650th Maintenance Company of the Colorado National Guard, took the top spot for all National Guard male runners and sixth place overall.

Sico finished in a time of 2 hours, 39 minutes and 20 seconds, which was 70 seconds faster than the next National Guard finisher.

The 26-year-old was participating in just his second full marathon.

Sico ran cross-country collegiately at State University of New York at Plattsburgh. However, those races never included a 26.2-mile course.

As a relatively new marathon runner, Sico had just one goal.

“I just wanted to finish,” said Sico.

In preparation for the marathon, Sico started training in

November.

“I ran 20 miles every Sunday and five to seven miles a few days during the week,” said Sico. “But I really couldn’t get the training I wanted because I’m currently going back to school.”

Sico said he didn’t realize he was doing so well in the race until mile 13 when all the half marathoners turned.

“Everyone started yelling at me that I was the first National Guardsman, and I looked around and realized I was,” said Sico.

After he finished the race, Sico said he felt relieved, however, he thought he wouldn’t be able to move the next day.

“I’ll probably compete again next year,” said Sico. “But I have a PT test in two weeks that I need to start training for.”



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Championship Form: Sgt. Alex Sico, 3650th Maintenance Company from the Colorado Army National Guard, runs the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 4.